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A last farewell

This morning President Hosni Mubarak arrives in Paris to pay his last respects to François Mitterrand, France's longest serving president, who died on Monday, aged 79. President Mubarak will be joined by up to 20 heads of state and numerous dignitaries, including UN Secretary-General **Boutros Ghali and American Vice** President Al Gore, at a solemn mass in the cathedral of Notre Dame which will take place simultaneously with Mitterrand's funeral in Jarnac, writes Sherif El-Shubashy.

During the final years of his 14 year presidency Mitterrand was a regular visitor to Egypt, and tried to spend at least a couple of weeks in Aswan each winter. He came in search of peace and the sun, he said during his last visit to the country three weeks before his death, when he stayed, as always, at the Old Cataract Hotel.

Mitterrand left Egypt for the last time on 29 December. On 5 January he wrote to President Mubarak, via the Egyptian ambassador to France, expressing his appreciation for the hospitality extended to him in Egypt, and his admiration of the beauty of the last to bear the signature country. The letter was perhaps the







Taking leave: François Mitterrand departs the Old Cataract Hotel in Aswan for the last time oo 29 December, before being driven to the airport on his

Time pressure for peace

As Warren Christopher began a new round of shuttle diplomacy in the region, Jordan's King Hussein made his first public appearance in Tel Aviv

Ganzouri yesterday re-ceived Philippe Seguin. president of the French National Assembly, who arrived in Cairo from Syria on the last stop of a Middle East tour. The two leaders discussed bilateral relations and the Middle East peace process. The head of the foreign relations committee at the People's Assembly and the French ambassador to Carro attended the meeting.

Ganzouri

meets Seguin PRIME Minister Kamal El-

Prisoner release A WEEK abead of the Pa

estinian elections, Israel yesterday released hundreds of Palestinian prisoners as part of its peace agreement with the PLO. Among the 850 released were members of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups, as well as other Palestinians convicted of killing Arabs collaborating

While the oumber of prisoners to be released over the next few days is expected to reach 1,200, some 25 female prisoners refused to leave jail in protest against Israel's insistence on not free-ing six other female immates convicted of killing Israelis.

New unrest

A BAHRAIN government source has stated that security forces used "legal" methods to disperse a gathering of a few hundred demonstrators in Al-Dech, outside the capital Manama, on

A statement by the opposi-tion group the Bahrain Freedom Movement, claimed that hundreds of protesters io Al-Dech, Jadhafis, and Sanabes took to the streets to protest the government's persistent policy of closing down mosques and clamping down on prominent Shi'ite opposition clerics and their followers.

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of pan-Arabism. Eghal Ainmad: An ambiguous harvest of terror. David Du Bois: Time for change. James Zogby: Arti-terrorism issue torism like menor Herman Ouseley: Policing Britain's blacks ed El-Sayed Solice: enment or fraud?...

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Jeor Secretary of State Warter Christopher arriver in Jerusalem yesterday at the outset of a new round of shuttle diplomacy, and pledged to intensify efforts to achieve a Syriam-Israeli peace agreement ahead of US and Israeli elections later this year. On leaving Washington, Christopher said that the talks had now reached a crucial stage where both sides could see the tradeoffs necessary for a settlement — at apparent allowing withdrawal from the Goleo Heichter.

"We've come to a critical point in the negotiations, where we need to coalesce on some of the main issues", he said. "We need to bring them together and to move forward at an intensified pace."
As Christopher met with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon

volving withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Peres, Jordan's King Hussein flew his private belicopter to Tel Aviv for a one-day visit intended to cement the new friendship between the two countries.

Israeli radio stations played Arabic songs in honour of the king's visit. "Welcome, your majesty, King Hussein", read a banner headline in Arabic in the Israeli Hebrew-language daily newspaper Yediot Ahronot.

Hussein's visit seemed to be timed to send a message to Syria about the kind of peace Israel is demanding after years of being shunned by the Arab world as an illegitimate creation of the West, according to The Associated Press.

Hussein told Yediot Ahronor. "I'm certainly aware of my

popularity [in Israel] and it touches my heart." Hussein and Peres were meeting with Christopher to "exchange views on peace and on the possibilities of expanding it", the king said. Meanwhile, Christopher acknowledged that "there are very serious gaps" remaining between Syria and Israel, but said he had arrived in Israel. "in a hopeful frame of mind".

His 16th negotiating trip to the Middle East got off to a bumpy start. First, his departure from Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, was delayed for three and a half hours because of blizzard conditions. And on the way across the Atlamic, the automatic pilot failed, causing the plane to list

Following the meeting with Peres, Christopher was asked if the Israeli general elections in October and US presidential elections in November would have an impact on the negotiations. They did, he replied, impose a time-scale on the peace process: "1996 has its electoral timetable which inevitably requires intensification, an acceleration of the process. We are going to intensify our efforts to ensure that Israel achieves peace with security.

For his part, Peres said Israel and Syria would need to ac-celerate the pace of negotiations if they wanted to seal an ac-cord before the Israeli elections. "We have only a few months at our disposal... and without a very intensive effort,

I doubt if we'll be able to succeed," he said. But he described the two rounds of talks held near Washington recently as "a highly successful encounter" which

had "initiated a new spirit between the two sides". Christopher will meet with Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad in Damascus on Friday, boping for a response to Is-rae!i proposals made in talks which recessed a week earlier.

The trip is expected to result in dates for more talks between Israeli and Syrian officials in the United States, possibly around 22 January. "All the issues are on the table and it is possible for the

parties now to see the tradeoffs", Christopher said. The neonations are concentrating on territory, peace terms and border security measures in the case of Israel returning the strategic Golan Heights, captured in the 1967 War.

The Syrian government yesterday signalled its readiness to engage in "continuous negotiations" with Israel until the two sides reached a peace agreement. The official newspaper Al-Banh said that "great hopes" were attached to Christopher's current trip.

According to the newspaper, "If there is anything new in the Syrian position, it is a readiness to engage in continuous negotiations, negotiations that will bring the results necessary both for peace and regional security." Next weekend, Christopher will meet with PLO chairman

Yasser Arafat, focusing on the 20 January elections of a legislature for the self-rule areas in the West Bank and Gaza. Arafat has blamed Peres for the recent assassination of Islamist militant Yehiya Ayyash, who is believed to have mas-

terminded suicide attacks against Israel. In a departure from his recent refusal to praise terrorists, Arafin also lauded Ayy-ash. The killing and its aftermath could be a source of friction. "I'm going to be reminding [Arafat]," said Christopher, "as I've done every time I've been with him, about his com-

mitment to bring up end to terrorism."
PLO officials have criticised Hussein's visit to Israel, saying that he should first have visited lands under Palestinian

Authorities clamped unprecedented security arrangements on Tel Aviv, deploying some 6,000 policemen, special forces, Shin Bet agents and snipers to protect the keysure of Tel

Hussein was welcomed with full military honours at Tel Aviv airport by Peres, before inaugurating a new trauma unit dedicated to Yitzhak Rabin at the Ichilov Hospital, where the prime minister died on 4 November after he was shot by a Jewish radical.

The king was travelling afterwards to the shores of the Sea of Galilee in northern Istael to take part, with Peres and Christopher, in a ceremony honouring "those who have contributed to the cause of peace".

Steering towards growth

government steered towards a full-fledged economic recovery.
The Foreign Trade Department was moved from the Ministry of The Foreign Trade Department was moved from the Ministry of Economy to the Ministry of Supply and Home Trade, the Ministry of International Cooperation went to the minister of economy, and the man who spent over 10 years marketing Egypt as an investment destination was put in charge of the Public Enterprise Sector, Administrative tax collection.

The economy bore the full weight of last week's cabinet changes, geared to ac-commodate the needs of the second phase of

By Ghada Ragab The appointment of Prime Minister Kamal onomic and social plan that has taken Egypt from a centrally planned to a market economy over the past five years. He has been at the heart of the decision-making process for the 13 years

he has spent as a cabinet minister. As outlined in President Mubarak's meeting with the cabinet's economic group last Sunday, the pressing tasks before the new cabinet are in speed up the second phase of economic reforms, which aim at generating employment, increasing the productivity of labour and capital and improving the quality of life for the average Egyptian.

in this context, the long-awaited investment law promises finally to materialise after years of being passed from one parliament to the next. The main purposes of this law are to unify existing the investment laws, which occasionally overlap; to cut red tape involved in establishing projects; and to offer tax incentives to industrial projects. Also on the cabinet's agenda is a system of tax rebates for exporters, and proposals to cut bank interest rates.

Private investors, who point out that the government has been promising to enact many of these measures for over a decade, found consolation in the appointment of Mohieddin El-Gharib, as the new minister of finance. El-Gharib was for 10 years the executive president of the General Authority for Investment (GAFI), the government body which awards permission for the establishment of new projects. Touring the world and giving dozens of speeches to lure both foreign and Egyptian investors, El-Gharib emerged as a symbol of the government's scriousness in attracting investment.

Businessmen say they hope El-Gharib's appointment is a sign that the government is preparing to reverse the tight fiscal policies it has followed since the inception of the economic reform programme. Last week, El-Gharib said he plans to orient ministry policies towards promoting growth and encouraging investment.

Nawal El-Tatawi, minister of economy and international coop-

eration, brings to the integrated portfolio a mixed, but relevant, experience as a banker. Formerly the chairwoman of the Arab Investment Bank, El-Tatawi is now responsible for gearing up the banking sector, the stock market and the foreign exchange market to serve the goal of investment promotion. El-Tatawi's experience as an economist with the United Nations

and the World Bank should be useful as she continues Egypt's four-year-old policy of funneling foreign assistance as loans to the private sector through the commercial banks. El-Tatawi takes on the ministry of economy minis the Foreign Trade Department, which Ahmed Gweili, minister of trade and supply, won for his firm stance against commercial fraud and monopoly in the local market. Since Egypt became a founding member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the department has been for-

cordance with the GATT agreement. Gweili's ministry will now be

Development and Environment Affairs, will News analysis

continue his task in restructuring and privatising the public sector. Four years into the programme, Minister Ebeid has succeeded in selling off part of the state's stakes in a number of profitable com-

El-Ganzouri helped make the change a panies, which have been snapped up at the smooth one. El-Ganzouri is known to be the architect of the ec-stock exchange. However, the real challenge will emerge when the state begins selling loss-making companies, which carry buge debts and employ hundreds of thousands of workers. Ebeid's ability to reconcile the necessity of ridding the state budget of this burden—given the difficulty of finding buyers willing to take it on — with the limitations imposed by the labour force will be sorely tested.

Perhaps one new cabinet minister Ebeid can rely on for help in dealing with public sector affairs is Minister of Industry Suleiman Reda, who brings his 30-year experience in the public sector in the post. Reda spent some 12 years in the public-sector aluminium giant, the Egyptian Aluminium Company, in which he conducted a massive restructuring and expansion project.

For the post of minister of state for planning, Ganzouri chose Zafer El-Bishri, who, as deputy chairman of the National Investment Bank

(NIB) since 1984 had been second-in-command to El-Ganzouri, who had headed the NIB while he himself was minister of planning.

The new cabinet takes on a mixed inheritance. The first phase of reforms, initiated in 1991, have achieved marked success in the monetary and fiscal areas. Government figures indicate that the average annual inflation rate was down to about 8 per cent last November, the budget deficit has been brought down to a record 1.7 per cent of GDP, the current account surplus is projected to be per cent of GDP, and international reserves stand at above \$18 billion, covering 22 months of imports.

On the structural side, however, the picture is less bright. Productivity is low and gross domestic investment is about 24 per cent of GDP. Experts say that for Egypt to double its current growth rate from 4.5 per cent to 9 per cent, gross domestic investment must increase to about 33 per cent of GDP. A massive balance of trade deficit approaching \$8 billion persists offsetting a 60 per cent jump in non-cotton, non-oil exports.

However, their diverse but equally testing responsibilities aside, the immediate task facing the new ministers is the new round of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund over Egypt's economic policy. The IMF team due to arrive in Cairo later this month will hold the first talks with Egyptian officials since their brief meeting last October in Washington DC, which was held on the fringe of the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank. The meetings represented a breakthrough in Egypt-IMF relations after an IMF assessment of the Egyptian economy showed that it was on the road to recovery, with growth rates higher than projected and exports taking off. However, IMF endorsement of the country's economic policies, which is necessary for Egypt to obtain the last tranche of debt reduction that has been held up since 1993, is still being withheld pending the outcome of the up-



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Opposition figures and political and economic analysts, speaking to Mona El-Nahhas and Rana Allam, rule out a policy shift following Kamal El-Ganzoun's appointment as prime minister, but some anticipate a faster pace of privatisation

Faster privatisation

Around midnight on 4 January, Kamal El-Ganzouri completed the formation of his 32-man cabinet. The key portfolios of defence, foreign affairs, the interior and information re-mained in the same hands, but seven newcomers joined the cabinet, mainly filling portfolios dealing with finance, the economy and economic planning. Eight members of Atef Sidki's outgoing cabinet lost their jobs and three portfolios were merged with others — population was attached to the Ministry of Health, international cooperation with the Ministry of Economy and housing with the Ministry of Construction.

Opposition leaders, viewing the change as limited", believe the new line-up will not lead to any major policy changes. However some interpret the concentration on change in economyoriented portfolios as indicative that the pace of privatisation and the shift to a free-market econ-

omy will be stepped up.

But Adel Hussein, secretary-general of the Islamist-oriented Labour Party, alleges that the changes in portfolios took place mainly for personal reasons. "It was Sidki who appointed the outgoing ministers of economy and finance because they were his personal friends, and not for any objective reasons," Hussein said. "With Ganzouri taking over, it was natural that new faces, more in line with his policies, would be

Hussein had been expecting a cabinet change following the recent elections. But in his view the changes did not amount to much. "A deputy prime minister [Ganzouri] was clevated to prime minister, and the bulk of the cabinet remained unchanged", he said. "I am not expecting any major changes in the coming period, and 1 expect the general policy to remain the same." Yassin Serageddin, chief of the parlia-mentary group of the Wafd Party, which sup-ports free enterprise, was nptimistic that the new cabinet would speed up the shift to a free-market economy. The outgoing cabinet was very slow in implementing privatisation", he said. "This, in addition to soaring prices and mounting taxation, was the main reason behind the change in the economic portfolios.

Serageddin expressed the hope that Ganzouri, with his contacts in the world's monetary institutions and his grasp of the refrements of the 21st century, would correct the course of economic reform. "Any changes will be limited to the economy. State policy, particularly foreign policy, will remain the

Serageddin also approved of the merger of the various ministries as a step leading to greater policy coordination and reduced expenditure.

However according to Ragab Hemeida, secretary-general of the Liberal Party, the dividing, and then merging, of some portfolios reflected the state's lack of a clear vision. People had expected that the ministers who had remained in office for nearly 20 years would be changed", Hemeida said. "However, what happened in the reshuffle was contrary to

Like Serageddin, Hussein Abdel-Razeq of the leftist Tagammu Party believes that the new cabinet will accelerate the transition to a free-market economy. In his view, Ganzouri was appointed as prime minister because be "is courageous enough to implement the sec-ond phase of the economic reform programme, which includes the privatisation of

Getting reform back on track

der Ganzouri, who has a history of 14 years of cabinet service, the new administration would continue to follow in Atef Sidki's footsteps. Although they ruled out any major policy changes, some of them said the principal task of the new cabinet would be to reach agreement with the In-ternational Monetary Fund (IMF) and to "set the economic reform process back on track".

Mustafa Kamel El-Sayed, a professor of polit-ical science at Cairo University, does not believe that the change in the economic portfolios sig-nals a change in economic policy. Ganzouri, he said, was deputy prime minister in the outgoing cabinet, and, as minister of planning for the past 14 years, was one of the architects of the nation's economic policies. Moreover, he led the Egyptian team in its negotiations with the IMF and the World Bank. "Therefore, it would he completely unreasonable to expect that the new cabinet would introduce changes in economic policy", El-Sayed said.

He said the fact that some portfolios changed hands "was probably due to the prime minister's wish to work with a group of people he knows well and can work smoothly with". He added that some former cabinet members were too close to the former prime minister to work with

Judging by precedents, the new cabinet will remain in office for a long time, El-Sayed said, because President Mubarak does not like to make changes in quick succession. "So, if the kind of political stability that the country has experienced for the past 15 years continues, one would expect the new cabinet to remain in its present form for years to come," he said.

Agreeing that no major changes should he expected, Salama Ahmed Salama, one of Al-Ahram's senior columnists, pointed out that the

new cabinet had been instructed by President Hosni Mubarak to build on what has already been achieved. However, he added, the main task of the new cabinet would be to reach a new agreement with the IMF.

To senior political analyst Lutfi El-Kholi, the cabinet changes amounted to no more than a "reshuffle of posts", and he expected no shift in pol-icy. Since the days of President Gamal Abdel-Nasser, cabinet ministers have been technocrats running government departments, and have played no part in politics. Like El-Sayed, El-Kholi believes the new cabinet will remain in office for a long time to come.

Heba Handoussa, general manager of the Economic Research Forum, used different language to describe the new cabinet's principal task. Declaring that a possible policy change was not the main issue, she said that the go was to set the economic reform process back on track. She described the new ministers with conomic portfolios as "very competent" and said they had been carefully chosen.

Economist Ismail Sabri Abdallah, chairman of the Third World Forum, believes that the new ministers in charge of the economic portfolios are "very promising". And yet, he said, any change in economic policy "depends on the relationship between various groups in so-ciety. The minister of economy is not the only decision-maker; there is the cabinet and the

president of the republic as well." Alieddin Hilal, the dean of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, said it was too early to pass judgement on the new cabinet or to make forecasts. His attitude is that we will simply have to wait and see: "We will have to wait until the cabinet has had time to get into its work, then we will



The cabinet will meet every Wednesday under the chairmanship of El-Ganzouri, right, who appears above with Wall, Metwalli and Tantawi















Cabinet newcomers

Seven ministers have been appointed to the cabinet for the first time. They are:

Mohieddin El-Gharib

Minister of finance Born in Cairo in 1937. Married with three sons. Received a university degree in economics in 1957, a master's in 1963 and a doctorate three years later. Participated in research for long-term planning at the Planning Institute and was appointed as adviser to the minister of economy's technical office in 1968. He also served between 1968 and 1972 as economic adviser to the General Organisation for Textiles. Between 1972 and 1978 he worked as director of projects for the Abu Dhabi Economic Development Fund and later as board member of the Joint Arab Investment Company. The last post he held before joining the cabinet was the chairmanship of the General Authority for ent and Free Zones

Spleiman Reda Minister of industry Born in Cairo in 1936, Married with

two sons. After obtaining a degree in engineering from Cairo University in 1962, Reda worked for the Nasr Piping Company before joining Egyptian Aluminium Company in 1972. He rose to be its board chairman in 1983 — a post which he continued to hold until he was appointed to the cabinet.

Nawal El-Tatawi Minister of economy

and international cooperation Born in Cairo. Married with two sons. Holds a degree in economics from the American University in Cairo (AUC) and master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Wisconsin. She began her career with the National Bank of Egypt before working as an ec-onomic expert for the United Nations and the World Bank. She later joined the Arab Investment Bank and rose to be its board chairwoman in 1992. She was one of 10 people appointed by President Hosni Mubarak to membership of the People's Assembly in De-

Born in Cairo in 1931. One of the nation's top economic planning experts, he has lent his expertise to Sudan and the United Arab Emirates. In 1981, he became first under-secretary at the Ministry of Planning and was ap-pointed vice-president of the National Investment Bank under Kamal El-Ganzouri in 1984.

Talast Hammad Minister for cabinet affairs

Born in 1934 in Dagahliya. After ob-taining a law degree in 1955, he worked as assistant district attorney in various parts of Giza, Port Said and Cairo, later rising to be a judge and then chairman of the Alexandria Court of Appeals. In 1989, he was made secretary-general of the specialised national conneils.

Dr Ismail Sallam Minister of health and population Born in 1941 in Menoutiya, Married with three children. Graduating from

the Faculty of Medicine in 1964, he later became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS) in London, received a doctorate degree from the University of Glasgow, and worked as professor of heart surgery at Ain Shams University. Sallam has also served as a member of the Shura Council since 1992 and is chairman of the council's health committee.

Mahmonti Zaqzouq Minister of Al-Awqaf (religious en-

Born in 1933 in Dagahliya. Married with one daughter. Graduated from the Arabic Language Faculty of Al-Azhar University in 1959 and obtained a doctorate from Munich University in 1968. He taught at Al-Azhar's Usul Al-Din (Religious Fundamentals) Faculty, later becoming its dean. He was appointed vice-president of Al-Azhar University two months ago. He has written 15 books on Islam and Islamic philosophy.

Compiled by Nevine Khalli

Layoffs at US Embassy

The three-week partial shutdown of the US government has ended, but several Egyptian employees of the US Embassy have lost their jobs and others are worried, writes Giham Shahine

After forcing a partial shutdown of the US government for three weeks, the Republican-dominated Congress has ap-proved legislation that will put 280,000 essential federal workers back in their offices on full pay until 26 January. Although the Republicans appeared to be making a small retreat from their hardline strategy of using the cash-flow crisis to force President Bill Clinton's acceptance of their seven-year balanced budget plan, what will happen after Jan-uary 26 remains unclear.

As a result of Congress' move, money has finally arrived at the US Embassy in Cairo, which, in the words of press attaché Rick Roberts, "had literally been operating without funding until the end of last week, with employees receiving only half-pay for the last pay period. Staff will be paid the re-mainder of their salaries by the end of this week. The consular section is back in business and the cultural centre's library will also reopen this week.

But because of the cash-flow problem, 28 Egyptian employees - 22 working for the State Department and six for the US Information Service (USIS) — have been laid off, Roberts said. The staff reduction process, he explained, has taken two forms: the furlough system applied to American civil servants, and the "reduction in force" (RIF) system, which is applicable to Egyptian employees of the US government. Under the furlough system, an employee's job is suspended for a certain period until the cash-flow problem is resolved, with the employee guaranteed full payment for the suspension period. But RIF means dismissal. The laid-off Egyptian staff receive a severance package, which includes severance pay amounting to two months' salary plus a month's salary for every year of employment, in addition to any holiday

While some of the laid-off employees have found consolation in the fact that

they had been dismissed because of budgetary problems and not for lack of efficiency, others felt their dismissal was discriminatory. They asked why the embassy had not given all its employees part-time jobs instead of disssing some and keeping others, and why the Egyptian staff had been dismissed rather than furloughed. "Egyptians cannot be furloughed as

the Egyptian labour law does not allow it," countered assistant press attache Robert Ogborn. Press attache Roberts added that cutbacks are made according to complex objective criteria.

Employees are categorised according to their jobs by the personnel de-partment. When a decision is made to reduce the number of jobs at a certain level, the personnel department starts the process of rating those who are doing similar functions according to their evaluation record over the past five years, the number of years they have

speed with which they have been promoted. The required number of lay-offs are then made according to these criteria. In some cases, a whole programme is eliminated.

"It is a very difficult decision for a manager to lay off an employee," Roberts said. "No one likes to lose an efficient worker. So we often try to recommend them to other missions. We all hope this nightmare will end soon." But it remains unclear whether there

will he further federal staff cutbacks, whether money will continue to flow in and whether those who are back at work will continue to keep their jobs. It all depends on the final budget, which the White House and Congress should agree on by the 26th of this month.

We are in a situation where it is difficult to project," said Roberts, "The administration, however, seems clearly committed to making the federal goveroment staff smaller, at this moment served the federal government and the no one can tell how much smaller."

Businessmen's 'lobby' in new Assembly

In an age of free enterprise, husiness is seek-ing political power. This was one of the conclusions to be drawn from the 1995 parliamentary elections, in which a large number of businessmen ran for office, and 41 of them won seats. Some are newcomers in the political scene, and their primary target appears to be the acquisition of parliamentary immunity. Others seem more interested in shaping the new market-oriented laws that will have a di-

rect bearing on their business interests. Rifaat El-Said, secretary-general of the leftist Tagammu Party, made a point of dividing the businessmen who ran for election into two categories. Onc group, he said, "cannot be called businessmen in the true sense of the word be-

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A large number of businessmen contested the recent General Assembly elections, and many of them won seats. Why do entrepreneurs want to become parliamentarians? Gamal Essam El-Din analyses the new phenomenon

cause, as far as 1 can make nut, they made their moncy by illegal means, such as smng-gling, selling sub-standard food or trading in state-owned land." El-Said blamed

> and vote-buying which were ram-pant in the 29 November ballot and 6 December runoffs. On the other hand, he added "There is another group of gen-uine businessmen, highly re-spected for their large-scale enterprises. These people are members of the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the

this group for the acts of thuggery

According to El-Said, the objective of the first group is political power and parliamentary immunity, while the second group is seeking a atronger influence in the formulation of new economic laws that directly affect their in-

Yassin Serageddin, chief of the Wafd Party's parliamcotary group, agreed with El-Said's assessment Since the government was in-creasingly depending on the private sector to raise the volume of investments, he said, it was natgreater say in shaping investment ergy committee. and market-oriented legislation. Of the 41 busioessmee who won seats, 16 are members of two

prominent business organisations: the Egyptian Businessmen's Association (EBA) and the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham). EBA members include Mahmoud Mohamed Abul-Nasr (a wool blanket manufacturer), Amin Hammad (a public contractor and wood trader), Mamdouh Thabet Mckki (an exporter and importer of leather products), Mahmond Azzam (a private contractor and also an import-export trader), Talaat Mnstafa (another private contractor) and Mohamed Abul-Enein (a ceramics manufacturer). All of them are

Parliamentarians who also belong to Am-Cham include Ala'a Kamel Diab (executive manager of a group of five companies involved in petroleum services, land reclamation, elec-tronics, contracting and urban development) and Ahmed Khairi (shipping and maritime activities, tnurist and travel services and land reclamation).

The husinessmeo have managed to join some of the Assembly's key committees, enabling them to form a strong lobby. The 39-person ec-onomic committee includes 14 businessmen active in banking, foreign exchange, insurance and other economic spheres. According to the committee's chairman, Dr Mustafa El-Said, the committee will deal with a large amount of proposed economic legislation, including an anti-trust law, laws regulating chambers of commerce and foreign exchange, the unified investment law, the commercial markets law and a foreign trade law.

The 27-person plan and hudget committee, which deals with customs regulations and taxes on investment projects, includes 11 husinessmen. Eleven others, many of them public contractors, are serving on the 49-person housing committee. One of this committee's main tasks will be to discuss a new housing law which will revamp the apartment-rental system to encourage greater private investment in housing. Ten businessmen, most of them industrialists, ural for husinessmen to seek a are serving on the 46-person industry and en-

In addition to the 41 businessmen who are Assembly members, 31 others have seats in the Shura Conneil.

Al-Yassar back on the market

The leftist monthly Al-Yassar is back on the newsstands after financial problems forced a two-month halt in publication. IChaled Dawoud discovers how the magazine plans to survive

nancial problems, resumed publication at the beginning of January. Supporters of the mag-azine, which serves as a forum for Khaled Mohieddin's Tagammu Party, had opposed the shutdown. They charged that the party's weekly mouthpiece, Al-Ahali, could no longer properly be described as an opposition newspaper, because it was increasingly leaning towards the government line.

Hussein Abdel-Razeq, Al-Yassar's editor-in-chief, said that be hed been able to issue the magazine again despite having raised only 40 per cent of the required finance, because be had received further pledges of financial support. An association called 'Friends of the Left' has been formed, with each member promising to pay LE100 as an annual subscription. Abdel-Razeq said that at least 500 people had promised to join the association. "This will provide us with LE50,000 annually, which is enough to cover our losses and ensure that publication will not be interrupted", he said.

Despite being 60 per cent short so far, be was optimistic "that more money will come in, and we will have more than 500 members in the association".

The January issue lashed out at the way the government had run the recent parliamentary clections, claiming that the widespread vi-olence that had marred the balloting bad dashed public confidence in democracy as a means of political change.

The same issue featured a new section on

women's affairs, which, Abdel-Razeq said, was an attempt to oppose calls by Islamists to keep women confined to the home. Another article, by Abdel-Razeq, warned of alleged oew plans for the Middle East which would strengthen the US presence in the region and assure the dominance of Israel.

And, possibly to give the impression that

The leftist monthly magazine Al-Yassar (The there was bope of a worldwide leftist revival, Left), which folded in October because of fi-Russian parliamentary elections in which the communists won the majority of seats. Another article condemned the military regime in Nigeria and its human-rights record, particularly the execution of eight human rights ac-

"We always intended to resume publication, because we believe that Al-Yassar, as Egypt's only monthly leftist publication, fills a gap in the cultural scene, said Abdel-Razeq. I believe that despite its ups and downs, the left is an integral part of Egyptian politics and so-

ciety."

Abdel-Razeq denied that the sharp tone used by Al-Yassar, when compared to the official statements of the Tagammu and its monthpiece Al-Ahali, necessarily reflected the existence of divisive factions within the party. "Actually the presence of Al-Yassar reflects the democracy we have inside the Tagammu Party", he said. "Any party that does not include different views

is a dead party."

Although Tagammu Party leaders deny that
they have reached an under-the-table deal with the government, they concede that the party's opposition to the militant Islamist groups has ought it closer to the government. Those on the left of the party, however, insist on holding the government responsible for the country's social and economic ills.

The party leadership recognises that there are different views inside the Tagammu, and this is why they have supported the re-publication of Al-Yassar, Abdel-Razeq said. "We want the magazine to serve as a forum for all leftists, including those who disagree with Tagammu's official line."

Edited by Wadie Kirolos

هكذاءن الإجل



11 - 17 January 1996

USAID grants under fire

Members of the People's Assembly last week sharply criticised two US grant assistance agreements aimed at supporting agricultural credit and research. Gamai Essam Ei-Din reports

The newly-elected People's Assembly kicked off its first sessions of the year by debating six US grants to various sectors in Egypt. But, of the six, two, earmarked for the agricultural sector, the Agricultural Production and Credit Project (APCP) and the National Agricultural Research Project (NARP) came under fire by a number of

opposition and independent MPs. Arguing that US grants have consistently proven to have a negative impact on Egyptian farmers, El-Badri Farghali, an MP for the leftist Tagammu party, said, "Before approving anything, we have to ask ourselves to what extent Egyptian farmers benefited from this kind of grant." He went on to say that usually most of the proceeds from these grants are used to extend loans to farmers at "oppressive" interest rates.

According to the NARP agreement report, the aim of the NARP grant, which has increased in value more than six times from \$30 million to \$194 million, is to upgrade and modernise research applications in Egypt to increase cultiva-

Ragab Hilal Hemeida, a Liberal Party MP, demanded that the Ministries of Agriculture and International Cooperation submit to the People's Assembly a report detailing the benefits offered Egyptian farmers by this type of grant.

"Now we are required to approve raising the amount of this grant from \$194 million to \$198 million, but before taking this step, we have to know exactly what is the impact of these grants on Egyptian farmers," said Hemeida.

However, Ahmed Abu Zeid, leader of the ruling National Democratic Party's parliamentary bloc, lauded the grant, emphasising it would lead to high productivity, effective pest control, and to developing new varieties of crops.

With this, Abdel-Fattah El-Baradi, an independent from Al-Gharbiya province, begged to differ. He said the grant bad not increased the productivity of the strategic crop, cotton. On the contrary, he contended, the production of cotton has been constantly declining over the last 10 rs, falling from 3 million quanturs in 1984 to

The report on the APCP grant agreement also raised a few sceptical eyebrows. The objective of the APCP grant, whose value has increased from \$35 million in 1987 to \$309 million in 1987 to \$300 milli 1995, said the report, is in upgrade the services provided to farmers by the Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit (PBDAC) in terms of increasing the value of low interest loans and credit allocated to farmers.

This grant, said the report, has already increased the amount of loans provided to farmers to LE5 billion since the grant programme be-gan, covering 70 per cent of the costs of crop

However, a number of members of the National Democracic Party and the opposition criticised this grant. Abdel-Rehim El-Ghoul, the NDP's MP for Qena, stressed that the PBDAC no longer gives low interest loans, showing that "PBDAC now acts like a commercial bank and

US Economic Assistance to Egypt's Agricultural sector 1985-1994 MillionS 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995

has nothing at all to do with development - except its name." As a result, be claimed, the USAID grants have actually increased the loan burdens on farmers. He called upon the Ministry

of Agriculture in drop these loans.

Ali Fat'b El-Bab, the only Muslim Brotherbood MP, claimed that the loan was never used by PBDAC to give low interest loans. He said

interest rates on the PBDAC's loans to farmers had, in fact, jumped to 18 per cent, further encumbering the farmers. Faisal El-Sharkawi, an NDP MP from Gharbiya, added that this kind of grant is no longer viable because the government now considers the PBDAC as a commercial bank which has to transfer its profits each year

The old barrage linked the two banks of the Nile by a

road and a mobile bridge over

the lock, allowing vessels to

pass only at certain times during the day. The new barrage

includes a flyover, which en-ables ships and overland traffic

to use the facility at the same

The construction of the new

Esna barrage, which took six years, provided 3,000 job op-portunities. Now, some 300

people have permanent jobs at

"All the work was carried out

Power."
El-Bahnasawi said that a

large oumber of engineers.

technicians and workers had

benefited from participating in

the construction of the barrage

and would be assigned to other

barrage construction projects

the new barrage as an in-centive for businessmen from

Upper Egypt to invest their

money in the area. "Investors from the area used to take their

money away, preferring to

base their businesses in north-

em cioes such as Cairo, Alex-

andria and Mansoura. The

completion of the barrage is

part of the government's at-tempts to put Upper Egypt on

the investment map, the governor said. Other plans include

upgrading railways in the south. "These steps are a major

contribution to the economic

development of the region," El-Bahnasawi said.

El-Bahnasawi also regards

in Assiut and Naga Hammadi.

The logic of reform

Simon Bromley argues that only political reform can produce a domestic pro-adjustment coalition essential for sustaining reform

There are growing signs that the international financial institutions (1FIs) are becoming increasingly impatient with the cauoous pace of implementing growth-oriented reforms. This is especially true of the liberalisation of the foreign trade sector and the privaosation of the dominant public sector. Without rapid progress on these fronts, the World Bank believes that the growth necessary to sustain the macroeconomic adjustment thus far

achieved will not be forthcoming. The expansion of the private sector is the main objective of the second phase of adjustment. However, there are obstacles to the development of the private sector which are inextricably linked to

the policies of the reform programme.

Under Sadat's infitah, a large scale private sector began to develop, particularly through joint ventures, both in agriculture and industry. However, many bave questioned the power of the emerging commercial bourgeoisie and its allies as well as the liberal character of the injitah.

Some have even gone as far as to say that the economic liberalisation process has been constrained by the commercial hour-geoisie's dependence on the state. But if the commercial hourgenisie is weak and the infitah was not genuine libralisation, then what was the logic of change? One answer ventured is that inter-

national factors driven by unsustainable levels of indebtedness brought about economic liberalisation. While these interoarional pressures are real enough, it is somewhat misleading to see them as somehow 'external', as if the abolioon of the IMF and the World Bank would obviate the need for

adjustment or that debt write-off would solve Egypt's problems. If reform started as an ariempt to cope with the fiscal and foreign exchange constraints of the state-led model of development how solid are the preconditions favouring a private sector-led model of development?

There are genuine doubts about the appropriateness of the strategy called for by the IFIs. It may be that the strength of the co-alicon of enotlements (for peasants, organised labour and the in-telligeotsia) which formed the social base of the importsubstituting industrialisation (ISI) model is too strong, and the power of reform coalition too weak, to make reform politically

With regard to the reform agenda of the IFIs, it is possible to argue that things could and should be done differently. World Bank orthodoxy can be challenged on a number of grounds.

In the first instance, there is no significant empirical relationship between economic growth rates and reduced vulnerability to external sbocks, on the one hand, and either outward oriented policies or export promotion and trade openness, on the

Besides, there is no simple relationship between outward oriented policies and, either trade openness, or stable financial opennew industrial areas that bave ness. Nor is there a direct relation between exchange rate policy been established in Qena reand export shares and capital movements.

While it is true that trade openness does increase flexibility and the ability to cope with external shocks, financial openness may significantly reduce the ability to adjust to exogenous shocks. Equally, there is no unambiguous economic logic for a speedy reform process, nor for rapid privatisation of public assets.

More practically, both the comparative experience of the successful liberalisers that the World Bank idenofies as models (Japan and the East Asian oewly-industrialised countries], and economic theory suggest that there is a preferred order for optimum economic liberalisation.

Roughly, fiscal control comes first, followed by domestic fi-nancial liberalisation and price and trade reform, with privat-isation of the banking system and the freeing of foreign exchange on the capital account coming last. The successful Asian economies only removed state control over domestic and international capital markets late in the day, having had very extensive controls during the ISI phase and their early experience with export prothe site. "The new barrage is

another showpiece on the Nile," said Yehia El-Bahnasawy, governor of Qena. These considerations are of direct relevance to Egypt. The performance of state-owned enterprises has been negatively affected by adverse incentive structures as compared with the private secunder Egyptian supervision, by tor. Again, the first stage of reform bere is not to privaose, but to the Ministry of Public Works allow the public and private sector to operate on equal terms. and Water Resources and en- Only when this, more or less, is accomplished can priva

unambiguously pursued. In the case of foreign trade and investment, while it is right to turn quotas into tariffs, and to reduce these over time, there is also a case for targetted export subsidies to support export growth. There is also a strong case for targetting specific sectors to open to foreign investment, and to impose exchange control and export requirements upon these activities.

In sum, while there is a good case for export promotion and trade liberalisation, the case for rapid privaosacion, especially of the banking sector, and for full liberalisation of the capital account is not well founded in theory or in the comparative ex-

perience of successful late industrialisers.

Whatever strategy is appropriate, coalition building is both difficult and essential. The problem here has been that the con-sotuencies mobilised and created by state-led ISIs were inclusionist and nationalist, while structural adjustment is

exclusionist and opens the economy to foreigners. Support for reforms might be expected from public sector managers seeking greater autonomy and an opportunity to transfer their skills and assets to the privare sector and from the private bourgeoisie. Capitalists will have to come from somewhere. Given the weakness of much of the private sector, and given also the split between the small and micro-informal sector and medium and large concerns, it is not obvious that a critical mass for reform

exists. After all if Arab socialism foundered because there were no socialists, what would be the fate of Arab capitalism without The final and most basic impediment may be the character of the polirical system. The National Democraoc Party remains a tool of government control rather than an agency of change, and the patron-client relacions of corporaost forms continue to act as a brake on radical change. In addition, this kind of limited, pluralist accommodation of the bourgeois and elite interests makes impossible the negotiation of a social and political bargain with

peasants and the urban poor. Rather than push for a democratic opening that might allow a reform programme to be negotiated with the population, the government and its international backers appear to have opted for

those who will hear most of the costs of reform, the workers, poor

muddling through reform in an indeterminate fashion, and if necessary, by an authoritanian response to the crisis.

It is the problems about the appropriate kind of reform, and those of forgoing a new pro-adjustment coalioon, and perhaps most importantly, the fragmentation of power in the poliocal system, rather than an abstract lack of commitment, which together explain the limits of the second phase of adjustment thus far. If this is so, then it strongly suggests that political reform is not an optional extra but a necessary prerequisite to economic success, if an authoritarian 'solution' is to be avoided.

The writer is a professor in the Department of Politics at Leeds

New showpiece on the Nile

A new barrage across the Nile promises to do more than solve navigation problems in Upper Egypt. Amira Ibrahim went on a cruise to the site

Expediting Nile traffic, producing electricity and saving water are only some of the many benefits of a new LE650 million computerised barrage at Esna in Upper Egypt,

The new barrage, which came into operation in the summer, replaced an older one, built in 1908, which had been causing major problems upstream for navigation and irrigation and sparking electricity shortages.

Before the new project was finished, scores of Nile cruisers packed with tourists ran aground because of the low level of water at the old barrage, which also suffered from other defects including aging locks. Officials say the new barrier is expected to solve most of these problems.

"Nile cruisers used to spend ours in froot of the old waiting for their turn to arrive," said Ibrahim Abdel-Farrag, the engineer in charge of the lock and spillway.

The old lock was designed to handle one middle-sized vessel in 55 minutes. Sometimes ships were stranded for days during the Nile's low-water period. Thanks to the new barrage, Abdel-Farrag said, navigation is now with-The computer-operated lock,

which is 160 metres long and 17 metres wide, enables the simultaneous passage of two large ships in 25 minutes. It allows ships to pass through smoothly by efficiently con-trolling the level of water needed to allow the ships to go through," said Abdel-Farrag.

The gates of the lock and the side channels are operated by an electronic network, which includes a control tower and hydraulic systems. "I don't have to watch the gates, the

rket

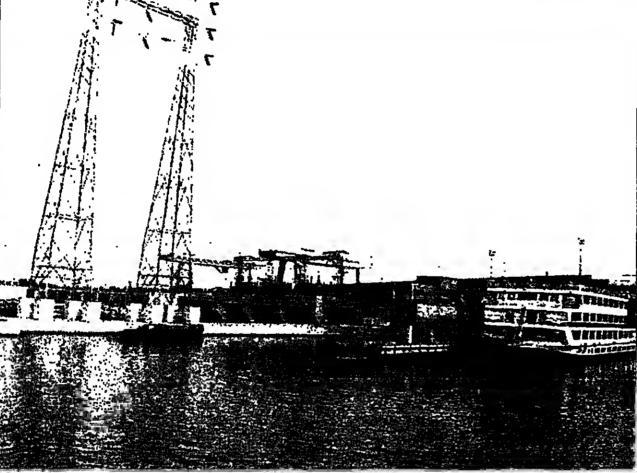


photo: Khaled El-Figi

power plant in the new barrage

It is all here on the control panel which operates the lock electronically," Abdel-Farrag

In 1948, the old barrage was raised several metres to meet increasing irrigation re-quirements in both Aswan and Qena governorates in Upper Egypt. But several decades later, the amount of water being

still not enough to satisfy the requirements resulting from the major agricultural expan-

"The operating system of the old barrage caused a waste of some 1.5 billion cubic metres of water every year," said Ab-del-Hamid El-Sadek, director of Upper Egypt Public Works. Using the new equipment,

close the gates by pressing buttons which guarantee a sufficient volume of water without waste. El-Sadek said that the water saved by the new dam could irrigate thousands of feddans of agricultural land in the area.

The difference in water levels on either side of the barrage is also being exploited to generate electric power. "The

equipped with six bulb turbines which are much more advanced than those of the High Dam," said Raafat Ali Soliman, operating engineer at Esna Power Plant. According to Soliman, power generated pressure on the High Dam power plant and meets the increasing requirements of the

Market report GMI slip and slide

ALL good things must come to an end, as was the case in the Capital Market's short-lived recovery. While the General Market Index increased by 1.05 points for the week ending 28 December, the GMI lost 2.33 points to level off at 211.73 the week ending 4 Jan-

usry, Along with the decline in the GMI, the volume of transactions also fell sharply, sliding from LE75 million in LE51.18 million.

The manufacturing sector's index witnessed an even steeper de-

cline, losing 4.5 points to close at 279.46 points. This was the result of a fall in the share value of 23 companies. The Paints and Chemical Industries Company's shares lost LE30 per share in close at LE650. Drastic as this drop was, investors in El-Sharqia Cotton and Linen Company were even more depressed. The company's shares lost 9.52 per cent of their value, the greatest loss percentage-wise sustained by any manufacturing sector company. Its shares closed at LE9.5 per share.

Other manufacturing sector companies, however, fared better. El-Nasr Clothing and Textiles Company's (Kaho) shares gained LE2.5 to top off at LE156.5 per share. In addition, the shares of two coment companies, the Portland Torah Cement Co. and the Helwan Cement Co., realised marginal gains. Portland Cemeot's shares closed at LE48.9 while those of Helwan closed at LE36.5.

Similar gains were accrued by companies in the wholesale and retail trading sector, whose index gained an impressive 21.66 points to close at 132.67. This increase was the result of a LE200 jump in the value of The Egypt Trading and Marketing Company's shares, which closed at LE300.

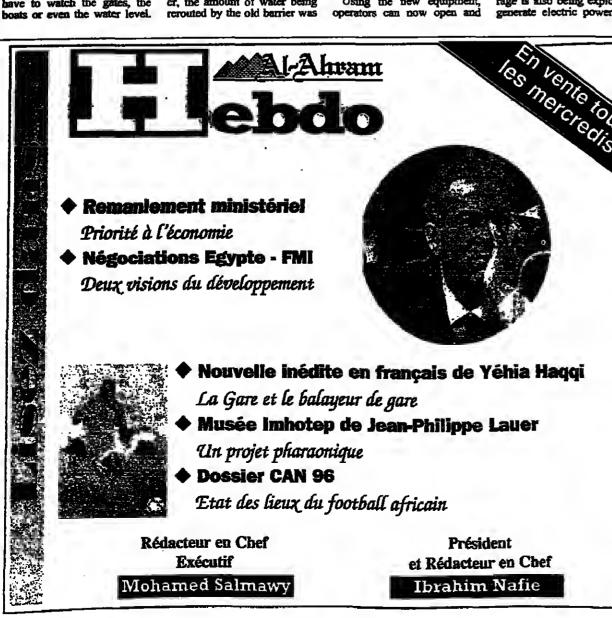
The financial sector's index, however, slid by 1.5 to close a 224.15. Shares of the Misr Exterior Bank lost LE25.25 to level off at LE479.75 per share. And, although the trading in the company's shares accounted for 20.37 per cent of total market transactions, per share to close at LE490 oer share. Trading in Delta International Bank's shares accounted for the greatest volume of market trans-actions. Approximately 49.2 per cent, or 792,373 shares of the bank

Again, trading of service sector company stocks was slow, with only those of the Misr Hotels Company (Hilum) registering a gain in value. The company's shares inched up by LE0.5 to close at

LE55.75 per share.

In all, the shares of 12 companies increased in value, 39 decreased and 37 remained unchanged.

Edited by Ghada Ragab





Fatah versus Fatah

Controversy over candidates for the forthcoming Palestinian elections marks the opening shots in a struggle for Fatah's political

Graham **Usher** from

soul," writes

"The main contract in these elections is going to be between Fatah and Fatah," says Bassam Khaldi, a local Fatah activist from Gaza. The way the race is shaping up for Palestinians' first national suffrage to be held on 20

January suggests that he may be right.

On 5 January, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) appointed Central Elections Commission announced that there were 676 nominated candidates standing for the 88-seat Palestinian Council. Of these, a colossal 500 are running as "independents", mostly on the strength of being influential businessmen, clan leaders or national figures in one or other of the PNA's 16 designated electoral constituencies.

Of these independents, however, 150 are "unofficial" activists from Yasser Arafia's mainstream (and dominant) Fatah movement in the Occupied Territories who have chosen to stand against the "official" Fatah list of 75 candidates, approved by the Chairman himself.

candidates, approved by the Chairman himself.

The elections have brought to a head a crisis within Fatah's ranks which revolves less around ideology — the programmes of the "official" and "uncofficial" candidates are virtually identical, and all are pro-Color and (iron-ically) pro-Arafat — than over what Fatah is or should become in the self rate. For many Falestinian analysis, it was a trisis waiting to happen.

Fatah's strength in Palestinian society is drawn from three main bases: loyalist elements of the PLO's old Tunis bureancracy who are now functionaries in the PNA's various ministerial, civil and security apparatuses, the territories' traditional bourgeois and mercantile classes; and the generation of Fatah "fighters" who wen their political sours in the utrising, and

tion of Fatah "fighters", who won their political spurs in the uprising, and whose weight lies in the poorer villages, refugee camps and prisons. The problem for Arafat with the elections was how to satisfy all three con-

Last November, he formed a special 20-member Fatah "central committee" (FCC) whose task was to determine the final list of approved Fatah candidates. To this end, primaries by local Fatah groups were held across the West Bank and Gaza so that the FCC could "take into consideration" the choice of Fatah's grassroots organisation. But these primaries almost unanimously returned candidates representative of the activists rather than of the "outside" PLO or Palestine's elite families.

"Fatah activists didn't want independents who support Arafat or Fatah in general", says West Bank Fatah leader, Marwan Barghouti. In the primaries, "they chose people from the movement who were active in the Intifada, who were in prison, who suffered from the occupation. These people are the best qualified to represent the Palestinian people."

But neither Arafat nor the FCC wanted this. Rather, says an "independent" Fatah candidate in Ramallah, Abdel-Fateh Hamayal, "the FCC's view was that the official list should contain well-known national figures, moradless of whether they are Fatah or not."

figures, regardless of whether they are Fatah or not." In the ensuing struggle over the list between the activists and the Arafat-

in the ensuing struggle over the last between the activists and the Arasalappointed FCC, it was, predictably, the latter which prevailed.

In Jerusalem, the FCC ignored the selection of its own Fatah members in
favour of a "national unity bloc" made up of Islamist, Popular Front the
Liberation of Palestine (PLFP) and "national figures" such as former PLO
spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi. This bloc eventually fell apart with the decision by Hamas and the PLFP to boycott the elections, but the bitterness it

caused among Fatah cadres in Jerusalem — especially those who were "bumped" in favour of non-Fatah candidates — has led at least two wellknown Fatah activists to run as independents. In Nablus, Arafat allegedly replaced the popular Intifada Fatah leader and ex-deportee, Hussam Khader, on the official list with representatives of the city's powerful capitalist class, such as Maher Masri and Shakaa, The up-

shot is that Khader, along with four other Fatah grassroots leaders, has now formed a "Freedom and Independence" bloc to stand against official Fatah.

And, in Ramallah, activists like Hamayal and the ex-prison leader, Qaddura

Fates — despite coming first and second in Fatah's primary for the city —

were forced to stand aside on the official list in favour of millionaire Yaqub

Hasomeh and the FNA's current sports minister and member of the miniscale Fida Party, Azmi Shuaibi. Both Hamayal and Fares are now running

as independent despite very fiver the FCC that "all mofficial Estab as independents, despite warnings from the FCC that "all mofficial Fatah candidates should withdraw or face expulsion from the movement".

These schisms are very likely the opening shots in a struggle over Fatah's future political soul, one where the main fault-line will be less along the old divisions of "inside" and "outside", or refugee and resident, than between those in Fatah who want it to become a modern political party and those who wish to preserve it as a "national" movement.

"I believe our decision to run [as independents] will strengthen Fatah's base in the Occupied Territories", said Hamayal, triggering a process where Fatah will be forced to adopt "clear social and economic policies" and have "leaders elected by the membership". Hussam Khader is not so sure. For him, the debacle over the official list between Fatah'a "leadership" and its grassroots base spells the end of the movement. "Fatah is dead", he said. "It has been superseded by the PNA, by the new realities thrown up by the In-

The coming "contest between Fatah and Fatah" in the elections may well show which of these two prognoses is nearer the mark.





PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Hamas spokesman Mahmond Zahar weep over the death of Hamas militant Yehya Ayyash, while Palestinians in the Gaza Strip pay their last respects (photos: AFP)

The Engineer's final exit

A carefully timed explosion has blown away Hamas's top bomber, and much more besides, reports Julie Till

The death of Yehya Ayyash brought hundreds of thousands of Palestinians onto the streets in Gaza this week in protest at his assassination. "Peres, prepare your coffin," was the chilling response of those who took part in the funeral procession of "The Engineer," credited with a string of suicide bombings against Israeli targets.

For nearly three years, the former engineering student topped Israel's wanted list, but maned to evade the security tentacles of Israeli intelligence — giving him almost mythical standing among his militant followers. That all came to an end on Friday, when a booby-

"It is a criminal assassination with all the fingerprints of the Israeli Shin Bet," said former Minister of Planning and International Coopcration and Fatah election candidate Nabil Shaath in a telephone interview with Al-Ahram Weekly.

It certainly bears the hallmarks of what Shaath describes as the

vengeful attitude of the Israelis against those who have taken vi-olent actions against them." In October, Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shaqaqi was gunned down in Malta. Israel characteristically refused to deny or admit responsibility. In November of last year another Jihad activist, Ham Abed, opened his car

door and was blown apart. Mahmond Zahar, Hamas spokesman in the Gaza Strip, told the Weekly that not only Islamist militants have come under fire. Activists from Hames, Jihad, Fatah and even the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) have been killed by Israeli undercover units. The death of Ahmad Abu Rizk, a member of the Fatah Hawks, at the hands of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) two months after the PLO-Israel agreement was signed in Washington and one week after he was granted an amnesty by Israel. provoked huge unrest across the Gaza Strip in November 1993. Six

pro-Oslo Fatah activists, were also killed in Jabaliya refugee camp in

March 1994 by an IDF undercover

Ayyash was clearly a prime target for the Israeli security forces. "His assassination, as one of the heads of the Islamist military opposition, was at the top of Rabin's priorities before he died. It has now been achieved by the Shin Bet," Ibrahim Ghoshe, Hamas spokesman in Jordan, told the Weekly.

His death will also boost morale within the Israeli security establishment embarrassed by its failure to prevent the assassination of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, But the timing of Ayyash's death is significent for another reason. Ayyash's as assination comes only two weeks before the elections to the Palestinian interim council on 20.

In the self-rule areas, Ayyash's death marks a painful and emberrassing blow to the credibility of the PNA and to its claim to be the sole protector of Palestinians in the self-rule areas. It is a predicament

ploit. At the funeral of Ayyash, Hamas leaders called for weapons con-fiscated by the authority to be returned. "Now everyone is sure that the PNA is unable to protect anyone. We have to look for ways to protect. ourselves and that includes Fatab, Ji-

had and Hamas," argued Zahar.
Palestmians have been plunged back into political uncertainty and economic instability after the recent emphoria surrounding the with-drawal of Israeli troops from six and a half towns in the West Bank. Israel, citing fear of reprisal attacks, has closed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in doing so around 50,000 Palestinian workers have been cut off from their i Israel and the transfer of goods has been held up at crossing points.

Ironically, Ayyash's killing foi-lows a four-month luli in the cycle of violence. "It comes at a time when Hamas had decided to stop its violent actions and follow a peaceful road after our (PNA) meeting in Cairo," argued Shaath. While that which Hamas has been quick to ex- may be reading a little too much

into the dialogue between Hamas and the PNA, there has been an unspoken moratorium on attacks in the self-rule areas. Such restraint is unlikely to persist.

Instead, the positive atmosphere following the reconciliation talks in Cairo has been replaced by angry recriminations. A Hamas leaf-let, circulated in Gaza hours after the killing, laid blame on the Is-raeli intelligence services, its met-work of collaborators, and a weak PNA which "provided the hole in the wall of the Palestinian people through which these services entered".

The consequences are all too Moshe Shahal said after the killing, "We certainly breathe easier for the fact that Yehya Ayyash is no more." But the question is for how long. In a fax to the Reuters agency in the Gaza Strip, Hamas set the clock ticking: "Let the occupying invaders and their stooges await the response to the Zionist crime," it said.

Bowing to billions

The long history of respect for human rights and for freedom of expression, in which Britain has always taken such pride, was forced to bow to commercial interests when the British authorities decided to expel the London-based Saudi

The Home Secretary clearly stated that the decision was taken after the Saudis had threatened British firms with the loss of billions of pounds sterling in arms con-tracts consequent to the Yamamah deal concluded in 1985.

"Out government exists to advance and protect the interests of the people of the UK," he said a few days after the decision. "That is what we are there to look after, and that includes the jobs and people of the UK, and that is an entirely le-

The Yamamah deal brings in annual earnings of 2 billion sterling, and guarantees 700,000 jobs.

Prime Minister John Major said that the decision was taken out of concern for Sau-di stability. "Mr Al-Mas'ari is an illegal

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The decision to expel the Saudi dissident Mohamed Al-Mas'ari is not only a blow to the Saudi opposition, but to all Arab opposition groups in Britain, reports Doaa El Bey from London

nigrant, who has used trapitality in political dissidents on its band. this country to wage a campaign to try to bring down the Saudi regime. The stability of the Gulf is very important. The Saudi Arabian position is fundamental to the stability of the whole Gulf," be said.

Mas'ari, who came to Britain in 1994, has waged a campaign affecting countries in the Saudi royal family through the Lon-don-based Committee for Defence of Le-

gitimate Rights (CDLR).
The Saudi royal family were annoyed by his activities, and appealed to the Brit-ish authorities to expel him. Britain tried to expel him to Yemen last year, but failed on the grounds that it would not be safe for him. However, this year they chose to expel him to the quiet Caribbean island of Dominica. He was given an ultimatum to appeal against the decision by

January 16 or else to appear at Gat-wick airport. However Mas'ari. who is now ap-pealing, said that his expulsion would stop the CDLR's activities. The expulsion is regarded as a blow to London-based Arab opposition

groups. Leith Kobba of the Iraqi Islamic Imam Khawqi Institution believes that, undoubtedly, the Arab opposition will feel less secure" and "more womied" about their futures in England. He ascribed this to the fact that Britain, which has been distinguished by its respect for human rights and freedom of expression, is now "shrinking the

freedoms it offers to

"It is obvious that these freedoms, which

were as sacred to Britain as religious beliefs are in our (Arab) states, are now con-trolled by personal interests," he said. He added that the British action would open the door to further British-Arab govthat their presence is likely to jeopardise British relations with these Arab states.

Kobba believes the affair has two dimensions. The first is the expulsion of Mas'ari, because his presence annoys the Sandi government, and, by extension, irritates arms exporters in Britain. The goverament was therefore forced to expei Mas'ari in an attempt to save British-

The second dimension is the principle of expulsion itself, which has now been set as a precedent in the British government's dealings with the Arab opposition in Britain. "The next step could be the expulsion of a Bahraini opposition group that has recently arrived in England. The Bahraini government is exerting every effort on the British government to expel them. Al-though British has refused in the past, given that it has decided to expel Mas'ari, it could do the same to the Bahraini group

and others," he said. Adel Ahmed Hussein, the head of the Sudanese Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in the UK, said that the deportation of Mas ari will put a question mark over the future of the Arab opposition in Britam. "At the end of the day, all depends on the country of origin of the opposition figure or group. If this country has no relations with Britain, there is no problem. But if good relations exist, as soon as UK interests with this state are jeopardised, the opposition will be affected," he com-

He believes that Mas'ari had got in the way of Saudi-British interests, and the UK would not allow its policy of harbouring opposition groups to jeopardise its

relation with any other country.

He added that Home Secretary Michael Howard's statement during his visit to Pa-kistan was clear, he said that the interests

of the UK came first, when it came to Britain's relations with other countries, he would not allow any person to jeopardise

Kamal El-Helbawi, spokesperson of the banned Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood said that cannal, every opposition group would now reconsider its case and think about its future in Britain. However, he added that the law was not against opposition groups working in Britain; as long as they did not break the law, the authorities would not have any valid reason for ousthig them. "Believe will be seen its long history of respect for human rights. They gave Masa'ari 10 days to appeal, unlike Abachi ("Nigeria), or the Arab regimes,"

He thinks that Britain's decision to expel Mas'ari was due to many pressures of a specific economic nature" from Sau-di Arabia, and he pinpoints "prejudice" from "some individuals" as well. "They are biased against religion, especially Islam. If they understood the true nature of Islam, there would be no problem with the

Islamists or even with the fundamentalists as they call them," he added. Azzem Sultan of the Freedom for the Maslim World (a British Muslim Forum) said that if the government succeeded in removing Mas'ari, it would be a serious precedent in the authorities' dealings with other asylum seekers. He added that it would also encourage the British government to proceed with amendments to restrict the freedom of political activists.

The [recent] bill on immigration happens to be part of a policy that has materialised over the past few years to save money and to decrease the number of asyhim seekers. It is a clear trend in all of Eu-rope, not only in Britain," he said. With this case becoming a political is-

sue inside Britain, Sultan predicts that public opinion will be on the side of Mas'ari, and that it will eventually prevent the government from proceeding with any amendments to the freedoms that

British people have long taken pride in. However, the British decision to deport Mas'ari, with the aim of silencing his campaign against the Saudi government, seems to be having the opposite effect. Mas'ari is now becoming a media superstar, and many people who had never pre-viously heard of him, are now keen to follow his activities, even when he moves to the quiet Caribbean island of Dominica.

Disappointing speculation

Though the new Algerian cabinet includes new Islamist faces, the reshuffle has disappointed some, writes Amira Howeldy

Two months after taking office, Algerian President Liamine Zeroual formed his first government on Friday folk wing several days of intense specialism. The minimal changes he made in the reshuffle, however, have disappointed some observers. The 31-member cabinet includes 13 ministers from the former transitional government, which President Zeronal besded for the last two years. The remaining 18 in-

ment, which President Zeroual headed for the last two years. The remaining 18 include only four opposition party figures, three of whom represent the Islamic trend. In the changes, Almed Murani, a breakaway founder member of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), has been designated minister of religious affairs; Noureddin Bahbada from Hamas becomes minister of agalenture and inseries; and Abdel-Qader Hamito, also a Hamas member, minister of small and medium enterprise. It is rumoured that several secular opposition leaders had rejected offices offered them, due to prime minister Oychia's insistence on including Islamists in the new-

Though the inclusion of the Islamists is a significant change of policy, for some observers it does not go far enough. They argue that Hamas' two cabinet positions will not provide the group with much political weight. At the same time, Hamas has been accused of tarnishing the image of the Islamists in its rush to take posts in the government. Ahmed Murani'a inclusion also does not come as a great surin the government. Annuel mairain a decision also does not come as a great surprise; he was a member of the Transitional Council after rejecting what he termed the "FIS" policy of violence".

Hamas leader Mahfouz Nelmah, however, argues that the two ministers ap-

pointed from his party are "economically and strategically important to the government." The ministry of fisheries, said Mehnah, is responsible for international agreements and regional communications, while the uninistry of small and medium enterprise is concerned with the transformation of the state socialist system to a free market economy. Perhaps most importantly for Algeria's young population, this ministry will have to construct an employment policy to provide vocational

Mobeldin Amimour, a prominent Algerian intellectual, told the Weekly that the "big promises" which accompanied the presidential elections had triggered hopes for "real change". But, he commented, "the reshuffle did not respond to the hopes of the Algerian people. They wanted to see all sectors of society represented in

Such criticisms aside, President Zeroual confidently announced last Sunday that the primary goals of the new government would be to "fight injustice and pursue a policy of tolerance with extremists." He also plans "economic reform along with

One major challenge facing the government is its preparation for the forth-One major chattenge racing the government is as preparation for the form-coming parliamentary elections. The exclusion of much of the opposition from the cabinet reshuffle has left some observers doubtful about how willing the gov-

emment is to give the opposition a chance at power. Dialogue with the FIS is expected to continue under Prime Minister Oyehia.

ehia has been negotiating at length with FIS leaders, and he is said not to support the army's cancellation of the 1991 elections and the banning of the FIS.

Oyehia, who comes from the largely Berber region of Kabaliya, is also expected to open channels of communication with the secularist Front for Socialist Forces (FFS) and the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), which have large Berber followings. Observers argue that these groups will play an important role

gene s remains. It is an unease compounded by the killings reported daily in the

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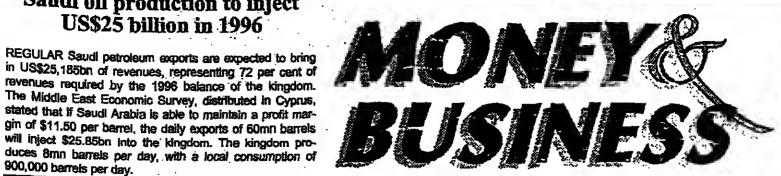
Over the past two years, in his former post as personal assistant to Zeroual, Oyehia has been negotiating at length with FIS leaders, and he is said not to sup-

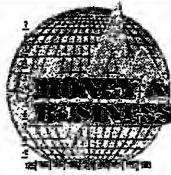
in the upcoming elections.

This reshuffle seems, however, to have done little to build consensus on Algeria's future, and discontent with solutions presented by the political author-

Saudi oil production to inject US\$25 billion in 1996

REGULAR Saudi petroleum exports are expected to bring in US\$25,185bn of revenues, representing 72 per cent of revenues required by the 1996 balance of the kingdom. The Middle East Economic Survey, distributed in Cyprus, 900,000 barrels per day.





Limited oil production increase

THE MONTHLY report issued by the Information centre of the council of ministers indicated a limited increase in oil production in the early months of 1995 which reached 151,000 tonnes representing e 3 per cent growth rate over the previous year.

The volume of local consumption of oil reached 20,596 million tonnes which represent helf the volume produced in

The report elso showed an upward production trend in 1995 except in August/September.

NBE records the highest profitability in 1994/1995

THE NATIONAL Bank of Egypt (NBE) has recorded es throughout the country) has played a crucial role in traditional banking services and wedding the activities tha highest profitability among public sector commerciel banks with a surplus available for distribution of LE100mn representing 39.3 per cent of the aggregate surplus of all public sector commercial banks. Besides, total footings as of 30 June 1995 mounted to LE77.2bn of which deposits grip LE35.3bn and loans. and investments LE28.3bn.

The sound and outstripping performance was coupled with a tendency towards a more solid capital base and healthler capital adequacy ratios squaring with international standards. NBE's capital and reserves grew by 6 per cent to reach LE1.8bn while provisions increased by 22 per cent to reach LE4.2bn.

In The Banker's Issue of November 1995, NBE cama on top of all Egyptian banks and number 11 of the greatest 100 Arab banks.

The bank's success in mobilising savings reflects its sound strategy based on introducing new saving pools tailored to meet the needs of various Income brackets and divergent customers.

attracting deposits to total LE35.3bn representing 33.7 per cent of total public sector commercial banks.

On the other hand, NBE is the exclusive issuer of the biggest pool In Egypt, namely the savings certificates with its three groups.

Net sales of the seid certificates since their first introduction in 1965 to June 1995 totaled some LE17.7bn.

The bank's success in attracting savings has had its positive repercussions on financing different economic sectors, fueling thus loans to total LE26.3bn representing 33.8 per cent of total public sector commercial

NBE sustained its support to the productive sectors by injecting loans to the industrial and agricultural sectors totaling LE6.6bn and LE285mn recording an Increase of 12 par cent and 9 per cent respectively against the previous year.

In line with its ambitions strategy oriented towards piecemeal transition to universal banking, the bank Moreover, NBE's network of branches (315 branch- embarked upon providing traditional and non-

of both commercial and investment banks together so es to stand fierce competition envisaged during tha coming stage in the framework of trade liberalisation, universal banking, merging and colossel banking en-

In fact, NBE has already adopted this trend since the beginning of the seventies by axtending Investment trustee services and providing all proxy activities on behalf of its customers including feasibility studies as well as company incorporation and evaluation. Moreover, NBE holds equity participation in 85 different economic enterprises with e total capital of

In line with its constant endeavours to cope with banking technology, NBE has tilted its activities towards expanding the scope of non-traditional activities, promoting investments, developing tha capital market and exteoding personal banking services.

On the international arena, NBE has assured its presence in the international markets via its whollyowned National Bank of Egypt, London and its equity

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Training programme New industrial exhibition

UNITED Specialists Co., announced the offening of its comprehensive training programmes for 1996, suited to

Number One in Egypt

the needs of different organisations operating In a wide range of fields. These programmes will be held in a number of European and Arab countries, including England, Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Both short and long-term programmes will be available, which, according to Mohammed Rida, operations manager of United Experts in the Middle East, will help participants gain knowledge and develop acquired skills.

Programmes such as these assist different organisations and companies in Implementing plans to develop their labour force and davelop employment structures.

Khalid Attiya, deputy general manager of United Experts in Saudi Arabia, said that the training philosophy relies on assisting companies in defining thair training needs and designing programmes to develop and expand employment structures via customised programmes, using the most modern and comprehensive training tech-

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NABIL HELMI, manager

of Guarantee for Marketing and Development, explained that an exhibition of industrial supplies and equipment will be held for the first time in Egypt, which is intended to serve a wide range of sectors required by the nation In its policy of boosting and raising its services until Egyptian

production, standards the exhibition and anjoy with those in foreign markats.

The idea of the exhibition is new, and will be held at 10 Ramadan City, a literal fortress of industry in Egypt. Because we believe that these services must ba offered to the Industrial cities. All investors and factory managers are strongly urged to visit 9.00am to 8.00pm.

are able to competa its benefits. So far, 40 major companies are participating in the exhibition, and It is hoped that the number and diversity of companies will increase so that the exhibition's goals can be met. Companies wishing to receive more information about the exhibition can 2452868/ 4178190 from

Business news

India demands less trade tariffs

SOUTH Asian nations should lower trade tariffs and work on forming e regional trading bloc, an Indien government min ster sald Monday.

Commerce Minister P. Chidambaram said the seven members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, should consider identifying goods that would not qualify for lower trade tariffs.

Other goods, he told a meeting of the South Asian comnercial ministers, could qualify for lower trade tariffs.

The steps would expand on e move by India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives to offer each other lower tariffs on 226 products as part of the South Asian Preferential Trading Agreement, which came into effect in December.

Chidambaram also said the seven nations of the SAARC should offer each other zero near zero tariffs on trade in primary commodities and remove quentitative restrictions as well. Primary commodities account for 64 per cent of intra-SAARC trade, he said.

But Chidambaram said the group must take further steps to reach its goal of setting up e free trade zone, preferably by the year 2000 but at least by

Canadian trade deals with India

CANADIAN Prime Minister Jean Chretien, premiers of 7 provinces and scores of business leaders embarked Monday on a twoweek trade mission to India. Pekistan, Indonesia and Malaysia.

With 308 businesses participating, it is among the argest trade missions ever to visit tha region. Chretien is expected to

sign trade deals with companies in Asia worth an estimated US\$1.5bn to Canadian business. in 1994, Chretien headed

a large trade mission to Chine. Only about 40 per cent of the \$7bn in deals signed in China have led to final contracts so far. Hui federal officials say that is a good success rate, given that it can take years to finalise deals in China.



Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt

The volume of financing provided by Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt since its launch for agriculture related ventures and animal production projects totaled LE 1.5 billion. This financing is chanelled towards the purchase of required materials and the construction of the production line.

Faisal Islamic Bank is a shareholder in many agriculture and animal production companies. Shares are worth LE 23 million.

Company	Activity
- Islamic Co. for animal production (El Qanater El Khairia)	- Poultry and eggs production
 Fotco - Ismailia National Co. for food processing 	- Land reclamation and cultivation, drying, freezing and packaging of vegetables, processing of fruit juices
- El Sharq Al Awsat for land reclamation (Gisr El Suis - Baqtar Sq- Heliopolis)	 Cultivation and reclamation of land - growing poultry, producing fodder and fertilizers
- El Giza Co. for agriculture related industries (Zawia Abu Muslim - Abul Numrus - Giza)	- Dairy products, cultiviation and reclamation of lands.

 Financing and participating in capital -intensive infrastructure projects besides providing medium and long - term credit.

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Le Pen feeds on poverty

Plunging public morale and deepening social unrest permit the French fascists to orchestrate a campaign of terror, writes Faiza Radv

While on the campaign trail last spring, pres- 1968," wrote Marcus Mabry. "After those days idential candidate Jacques Chirac spoke of protecting the poor and defending the welfare programme. At the time, he also vowed to make unemployment the "priority of priorities" and accused those who focused on the budget deficit of "exaggerating". Now, six months later, President Chirac is singing to a different tune.

Having reneged oo bis prior commitments. Chirac's resolve to slash social security benefits triggered militant strikes that paralysed the country for close to one month. Behind this autumn's wave of strikes is Chirac's determination to reduce the current five per cent budget deficit to three per cent to enable France to qualify for the single European currency in 1999.

Although the strikes seem to be winding down after the railway and metro workers' demands were met, the social crisis is a long way from being resolved. While sociologists refer to an ambient, deep-seated "malaise" and compare this autumn's strikes with the legendary May 1968 labour-student uprising, then student leader Daniel Cohn-Benedit disagreed. Comparing the two struggles, he explained that the '68 gen-eration fought to determine their future, whereas people now protest the loss of their future. Cohn-Bénédit's interpretation was almost echoed in Newsweek. Social unrest has yet to reach the furore or revolutionary ardour of May of rage, France forged a new social contract. Today's turnult marks the death of that contract." In effect, governments of the right and left have progressively dismantled the welfare state

by adopting neo-liberal economic policies over the past two decades. In France, like els-where, the market economy determines a growing social disparity as the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. "Compounded and reproduced social inequalities form a system trapping an increasing number of people, who insidiously lose their rights and their citizen's status," wrote social scientist Alain Bihr.

Statistics indicate that the impoverishment of the working class, in particular, has recently caused an upsurge in racially motivated crimes and increased worker support for the fascist National Front (NF) Party of Jean-Marie Le Pen. While Le Pen's proportional gains at the polls in last May's presidential elections were not significantly up on '88 — 15.07 compared with 14.39 per cent — his social support base has shifted from lower-middle class to working class. In 1988, the professional, small business, artisan and farmer vote pattern showed a proportionally higher tendency than the general population to vote NF. At the time, Le Pen won about one-third of the small entrepreneur and artisan vote. Comparatively, the recent pres-

idential election results do not show any real Le Pen gains among this class, but demonstrate the development of his working class base. Since '88, labour support for the NF leader has increased by 11 per cent and this year, 27 per cent of the workers voted for him. Le Pen even scored ahead of Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin's 21 per cent and far ahead of Communist Robert Hue, who only captured 15 per cent of the lobour vote. Moreover, opinion polls indicate that 33 per cent of the socio-economically marginalised and politically disadvantaged favour the NF.

Since Le Pen'a meteoric rise to political prominence in the June '84 European elections, his party has been steadily progressing at the polls. Comparisons between the NF and Nazi discourses have by now become standard. Like the historical German and Italian brands of fascism, NF ideology exploits the working class's deep fear of losing their hard-gained livelihood.
Moreover, those who are totally destitute are
highly visible, their misery palpable. Like elsewhere, thousands of the homeless room the harsh city streets of France, anxiously on the look-out for the next precarious shelter, the next soup kitchen — desperately surviving. With un-employment rates soaring from three per cent in the early '70s to the current 12 per cent, youth unemployment reaching the 24 per cent level

and close to one million people on the welface rolls, workers' fears are made tangible.

Le Pen successfully manipulates this anxiety the fear of being next in time - by targeting alien Arabs and Africans, who allegedly cause unemployment by flooding the market and usurping jobs that should rightfully go to the French. He also blames the foreigners for the decaying moral fabric, the deteriorating infrastructure and the rising crime rate.

By playing on the ultra-nationalist theme of communal solidarity, based on white Judeo-Christian ethics, against the twin threats of "African underdevelopment" and "Islamic terror-ism", the NF managed to mobilise a segment of the working class. Deeply distillusioned with the late François Mitterrand's so-called socialist government that institutionalised social inequalities by promoting the "market" economy and tightening social spending — more so than governments of the centre-right — workers be-came disaffected from the traditional left en

Discredited and unable to offer solutions, the left evidently lost out to the resonance of Le Pen who finds ready-made culprits, promises jobs, vigorously heralds change — while remaining in the opposition. Fascism may loom large in France if the failures of the market economy are

Policing Britain's blacks

The racial riots in the London suburb of Brixton last month caught the headlines. But, stereotyping Britain's blacks as criminal — like some top police officers did will not do, argues Herman Ouseley

Making communities less criminally inclined is a long term haul, particularly in diverse societies where there is relative poverty and high memployment. Alternative youth cultures and racism are also prominent features. It is even more so in a city like London which is the most etimically,

and culturally diverse capital city in the world.

Sir Paul Condon [Chief of London's Metropolitan Police] called the shots when he declared his hand and went for broke by playing the race and crime card. That is why he refused to back down from his stance of insisting that young black people and street crimes were synonymous. He refused to apologise to anyone at anytime for the furore caused by his statements in his operation "Eagle Eye" devised to trap the "muggers". It was a clever sting. Hit first to neutralise the inevitable retaliatory blows.

Not that the retalistion would be that formidable. Mor people are decent enough and law-abiding and want all crimes of violence, including racially motivated violence, and burglaries eliminated. Policing London successfully requires not only good, honest, and clever police officers, but community sensitivity. It is analogous to a marathon: if you sprint too soon you could "burn out" before the fis-

Perhaps [London's] Metropolitan Police anticipated the e. Maybe they knew the risks, the likely reactions and felt they were on a winner. After all, there were three key goals. First to get the rank and file police officer to feel good about the new "stop and search" activities. Why were black people being stopped and searched in such ridiculously high proportions compared to white people? Sir Paul's letter provided the answer, the comfort, the confidence, the commitment and the assurances needed.

Secondly, public opinion was needed to reinforce the no-tion that the police were going to catch the criminals. Hoo-rahl And, as the public were telling police that street crim-inals were predominantly black so why chase anyone else? The headlines targeted anyone of colour and drew them into the net of vulnerability. Two nill

Thirdly, it opened up a wider debate about the causes of crime. Unemployment and exclusions from school are just two factors that disproportionately affect black young men. Although this represents a risk of "political correctness" it would be worth taking, because it would provide a chance to engage the black community in meaningful dialogue about the underlying causes and their responsibilities.

If the black community refused to co-operate they would be accused of burying their heads in the sand, refusing to recognise and respond to the facts, and doing nothing to solve increasing criminal tendencies in the black community. In other words, they had to be part of the problem.

Game, set and match. Well, almost! It seems that Sir Paul may have achieved his initial goals but the real prizes are yet to be won. The maration is not a

Very few black people who were invited to meet with Sir Paul failed to do so. There was much huffing and puffing but most people either turned up to hear what he had to say or had private briefings and tendered their apologies for not attending the formal meeting on 28 July. That fiscit was noted most for its media hype. In facthe whole scenario has provided a boon for the media, and high profile exposure for Sir Paul. It also enabled Bernie Grant MP, notably the black spokesperson on policing matters in London, to lead the challenge on behalf of the lawabiding silent majority of black Londoners.

Bernie Grant, more than anyone else, has maintained consistent public opposition against the Metropolitan Police's demonising of black people as a whole through Sir Paul's initiative — as orchestrated by the mass media.

However, by the end of the day Sir Paul Condon dominated all the headlines and his triumphalist agenda was

the one being heralded by virtually all sections of the me-The wider agenda is very critical. As Aubrey Rose, the Deputy Chair of the Commission of Racial Equality (CRE) said when attending the briefing: "You might arrest and convict 300 people for street crimes — but even if you manage to lock them up there will be more taking their places unless we sort out the deep-seated underlying prob-

What is being done to make parenting an issue in the curriculum? What support programmes are available in schools — especially, primary schools to assist those children labelled as "difficult", "withdrawn" or "aggressive"? These children often come from high-rise low-income housing blocks, experiencing a combination of domestic violence, poverty, unemployment, abuse, social depriva-tion, few positive male role models, low self-esteem, and

They come from both white and black bomes, but racism affects black boys in particular who are excluded from schools at four times the rate of white boys, and are three times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police than white boys. That vulnerability affects them persistently, so much so, that in London more than six out of every ten black males aged 16-24 are out of work.

Racism sadly remains an issue in both education and policing. Ask any of the community organisations that work on exclusions from school. The number of racial discrimination complaints against the police is another indicator of a problem that the Metropolitan Police still has

to come to terms with. What is clearly emerging is that the wider agenda, cleverly initiated by Sir Paul Condon, is the most important aspect of tackling crime in London and elsewhere. The community, including black people, are fed up with all sort of crimes and want them reduced. There is support for the police in tackling crime. But, there would be considerably more support for the police if they were to demonstrate their intention to be fair and not criminalise the innocent

or stereotype groups of people.

There has been no attempt to criminalise white people because they are disproportionately involved in child por-nography, sexual crimes, homicides, burglaries and serious fraud. Nor should there be such an attempt. Was it not Sir Paul Condon who said he was not interested in skin col-

Indeed, the Metropolitan Police would appear to have scored an own goal by failing to utilise positively, the excellent role models among black police officers in London.

We need to see many black people, especially black men, in their true light as making positive, law abiding contributions to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Britain. The monitoring and role model projects proposed will accentuate the positive views and actions among our young people of all backgrounds and, hope-

fully, isolate the negative minority from the rest.

It will be a long haul and right now the winning line still seems a long way ahead. But if we work together, sustaining and supporting each other with mutual respect and understanding, we will all be the winners.

The writer is chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality in Britain.



Ime for change white relations. David Du Bois explains why a former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus may be just that

America desperately needs a change in its blackchair of the Congressional Black Caucus may be just that

The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) is the premier civil rights organisation in the United States, at least for those who identify civil rights with the rights, civil and human, of African Americans. That is why the recent appointment of Kwesi Mfume, former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and Maryland representative in Congress, as executive director of the NAACP is an important de-

The NAACP was the idea of a group of liberal whites following a particularly gruesome lynching in 1909 of a black man in Springfield, Illinois, the longtime residence of Abraham Lincoln. Earlier, in 1905, W E B Du Bois, a then young, black scholar, had formed a protest body, the Niagara Movement, with a group of northern African Americans. Du Bois had achieved notable attention in academia as a result of a 10-year cycle of studies of the African American at a small, black college io Atlanta, Georgia. In 1909 the Niagara Movement was invited to merge with a New York group of whites at its organising conference to establish a permanent body dedicated to the advancement of

Some leaders of the Niagara Movement, suspicious of white leadership, refused to agree to such a merger. However, Du Bois, seeing this association as broadening and strengthening the black struggle, agreed to be one of the five founding members and managed to persuade most of the membership of the Niagara Movement to go in with him. This early expression of differences between hlack leaders regarding the role of white liberals in the black struggle has characterised the black movement throughout its history. Its dramatic expression during the 1960s civil rights struggles in the south caused consternation, frustration and finally rejection by many white liberals unwilling to accept black leadership of their efforts in the interest of African Americans. Kwesi Mfume, entering the board of the NAACP as executive director at this time, could force this issue to the

fore in the NAACP. The NAACP has operating branches in every major city or town and many small towns across the nation. Up to the 1960s civil rights movement, it was the membership dues and dime, quarter and one dollar donations of ordinary black folk that sustained the organisation. Local NAACP brancbes and leaders, sometimes to

the consternation of the national office, were alwoys a force in the turbulent civil rights battles of the 1960s. However, the white backlash that characterised the decades of the 1970s and '80s - what Stephen Steinberg calls the "white ethnic renaissance" in his important book The Ethnic Myth: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in America — compelled the organisation to depend on financial help from outside the black community.

Thus began a period of political retreat together with toplevel, mismanagement, shockingly poor judgement and internal sexist harassment culminating in the acquisition of a \$4.5 million debt, partly the result of lavish spending on per-sonal perks by the chairman of the board and the executive director. This came to light through the efforts of the widely known and respected black columnist and political writer, Carl Rowan, early in 1994 and shocked, angered and sad-dened the black community. The removal of Executive Director Rev. Benjamin Chavis Jr, after less than one year in that post, followed. Not satisfied, a rank-and-file membership rebellion, unprecedented in NAACP history, also de-manded replacement of Chair-

man of the Board William Gib-

son. In his place Myrlie Evers-Williams, widow of NAACP activist Medgar Evers, who was murdered by white racist southerners during the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, board in May this year. Myrlie Evers-Williams has

brought to the post a model of

life and leadership in the post-

civil rights era. As the former

commissioner of the Board of Public Works for the city of Los Angeles, she administered an annual budget of nearly a billion dollars. Her administrative experience is vast and untarnished. Her commitment has never been questioned. For many, her support for the appointment of Kwesi Mfume confirms her determination to clean house and revamp an NAACP leadership to make it responsive to the needs of its membership and the black community. They face a daunting task, with the massive debt and the sullied

One of the first "accomplishments" of the Gingrich-led Republican congressional majority on assuming power was to drastically reduce congressional financial and operational support for the Congressional Black Caucus, the body that brings together all the black members of the Congress. At

leadership image.

the time, Kwesi Mfume was concluding his tenure as chairman of the caucus. During that tenure and on the House floor. Kwesi Mfume had revealed himself to be intelligent, very articulate, uncompromising on principle, politically savvy, untiring, consistent, unafraid, at once independent and as caucus chairman, a builder of con-

In a courageous demonstration of leadership in the face of a growing white backlash nationally to the random destruction, looting and death in Los Angeles and other cities that followed the acquittal in the Rodney King police brutal-ity case, it was Kwesi Mfume, in his capacity as chairman of the Congressional Black Cancus, who initiated and hosted a black leadership unity meeting to formulate strategy. Participants included Maxine Waters, member of Congress representing South Central Los-Angeles, political stalwart and civil rights veteran Rev. Jesse Jackson, the controversial Minof the Nation of Islam and the then newly appointed ex-ecutive director of the

NAACP, Ben Chavis. Blacks are hopeful that the forming.

the needs of hlack Americans Since the days of Franklin D Roosevelt the NAACP has consistently placed its weight and its influence behind the Democratic Party and black voters have overwhelmingly followed suit. Under present conditions and with the new leadership of the organisation, together with

new leadership of the NAACP

will provide the kind of direc-

tion to the organisation that is

needed in what many feel is a time of crisis for blacks in

America. The leadership of the

"Republican revolution" in

Congress has already made

clear its intentions regarding hlack America: end affirmative

action, reverse redistricting to

increase black and minority

representation in government

implement severe curbacks and

restrictions in welfare, increase

the cost of health care and care

of the elderly and increase law

enforcement powers and in-

carceration. It remains for the

Democratic Party to provide a

viable alternative that speaks to

the new mood of unity, comister Louis Farrakhan, leader mitment and responsibility demonstrated by the Million Man March, the coming period in black-white relations in America may prove to be trans-

Edited by Garnal Nkrumah





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Anti-terrorism bill revisited

By James Zogby

For the third time in as many years, the effort to pass an anti-terrorism bill has stalled in Congress. A broad co-alition of legal, ethnic and religious organisations have come together to oppose this legislation. Their opposition is based on the fear that the proposed bill will violate a wide range of civil liberties guaranteed by the US Constitution, and will provide for the restantially abusive expansion tion, and will provide for the potentially abusive expansion

of law enforcement.

The 1995 version of the anti-terrorism legislation was initially introduced by the Clinton administration as part of its efforts to counter what they described as domestic US support for foreign terrorist activities. The administration's is bill included proposals to ban all US fund raising for groups defined by the president as "terrorist", deay visas to individuals identified with any such "terrorist" group, and allow for the use of secret evidence in extradition trials of individuals accused of membership in those organisations.

individuals accused of membership in those organisations. It was initially assumed that the administration's proposal would be accepted by the Republican-Ied Senate and Congress. Opponents of the bill, including Arab Americans, lobbied hard, receiving significant media attention for their complaint that the measures would violate constitutional protections. American-Jewish groups, on the other hand, lobbied equally hard in favour of the bill, arguing that it was necessary to stop terrorism, specifically Islamic and Arabic terrorism, from finding support in the US.

But the bill had lost momentum until the 19 April bombing in Oklahoma City added new ungency to the legislation

ing in Oklahoma City added new urgency to the legislation and new cause for the administration and Congress to seek an expansion of law enforcement authority, even beyond the provisions in the original bill enhancing the power of law enforcement agencies to conduct wiretaps and investigations into the activities of "suspicious groups" and

reducing the criteria needed to begin such an investigation.

Given the national traums in the wake of the Oklahoms City bombing, it was assumed that the expanded bill would easily pass both houses of Congress. But it was at this time that the civil liberties lobby that traditionally influenced liberal members of Congress found new and unexpected allies among conservatives. Angered by the behaviour of federal law enforcement agencies in two recent incidents, con-servatives were wary of taking steps to expand the role of

the government into the private affairs of crizens.

Public hearings were called in Congress to examine the role of law enforcement agencies at both Ruby Ridge, Idaho, where federal officers, in what some saw as an unprovoked attack, killed the wife and son of a right-wing expression of the control of the tremist; and the tragic events outside of Waco, Texas, where law enforcement agencies were once again criticised for the role they played in the deaths of scores of followers of the cult leader David Koresh.

. As a result of this new concern among conservatives, the coalition opposing the anti-terrorism legislation grew. To the organisational muscle of the liberal civil liberties groups was added the apparatus of such powerful con-servative organisations as the National Rifle Association, Gun Owners of America, and the Law Enforcement Al-: liance of America.

... The Senate ultimately did pass the bill, but with some significant modifications. While some civil liberties groups were not satisfied with the Senate version, the revised bill did provide some additional protections not found in the

It was in the House of Representatives that the bill stalled. A group of 50 conservative Republicans balked at the legislation and refused to accept either the administraa tion's, or the Senste's revised version. Even when a compromise was proposed, which would have deleted the en-hanced wiretap provisions, deleted funding for additional FBI personnel, deleted the provision to allow military involvement in civilian law enforcement and deleted the overly broad definition of terrorism, the conservative al-liance still refused to support it. Thus, a coalition of liber-als and conservatives in Congress ended the possibility of

passing an anti-terrorism bill in 1995. The Republican leadership in Congress and the Den-ocratic administration are both pledging to renew their efforts to secure the passage of an anti-terrorism bill in 1996. Both sides fear that the failure to pass such a bill will be

used as a campaign issue.

But while "anti-terrorism" remains an emotional issue, it has not dissuaded both liberals and conservatives participating in the coalition from insisting that any legislation be precise, and not allow law enforcement agencies to

- overstep their bounds During a recent press conference sponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union (the group that has led the effort against the anti-terrorism legislation), I made clear our community's continuing opposition to the legislation.

I based my case on a number of issues. First, the legislation is not necessary. In fact, to listen to the national outcry about terrorism in the US, one might conclude that the problem was of epidemic proportion. The FBP's own statistics prove the contrary to be true. During the 1970s, there were dozens of domestic acts of terrorism committed each year. Even in the early 1980s, when the FBI began to officially publish annual reports on domestic terrorism, the number of incidents averaged roughly 20 per year. In the past few years the number has been reduced to an average

of three or four.

It is also significant to note that the major source of such domestic terrorism is not from Arab or Muslim groups, as has been widely projected in the media. In fact, by the FBI's own count, since 1982, there have been approximate-ly 175 incidents of domestic terrorism overall. Of that number, 77 have been committed by Pucto Rican na-tionalist groups, 23 by left wing groups, and 12 by anti-Castro Cuban organisations. Eighteen acts were committed by what the FBI termed "Jewish extremists" and 31 by animal rights and environmental groups. By contrast, in the past 14 years there have been only three domestic terrorism incidents attributed to Arabs or Muslims.

Even a look at the State Department reports on anti-US terrorist acts committed abroad shows that those original inating in the Middle East by Arab or Islamic people are among the fewest. For example, in 1994, 44 anti-US terrorist acts occurred in Latin America, compared to 8 in the Middle East; in 1993 the numbers were 68 in Latin America. ica and 8 in the Middle East.

Terrorism is an evil and it must be stopped. But it appears that US law enforcement agencies already have the power to do the job and they are succeeding. In fact, the testimony of law enforcement experts was unanimous in stating that, as horrific as the Oklahoma City and World Trade Centre bombings were, there is nothing in even the most extreme versions of the proposed legislation that would have stopped either of these two hideous acts before

they occurred. In the case of the group around Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, one must remember that the FBI did, in fact, have that group under surveillance and even had informants operating in its midst. The informant was the government's star witness in the case against Abdel-Rahman, but neither he nor the FBI was able to stop the crime before it oc-

The World Trade Centre Case notwithstanding, to make Arabs and Muslims the targets of this legislation, as some American-Jewish groups and members of Congress have

done, is plainly wrong and not justified by the facts.
Our concern, therefore, is that existing standards should not be expanded to allow more intrusive activity by law enforcement. The coalition that formed to oppose the anti-terrorism legislation remains committed to lighting efforts to further crode rights that are guaranteed in the constitu-

to number erote residing in the US.

For three years we have succeeded in staying off such efforts, but our resolve will be tested once more in 1996.

The writer is president of the Washington-based Arab American Institute.



Fighting between rival militias of the United Liberation Movement (ULIMO) erupted this week around Tubmanburg, 60 km away from the Liberian capital Monrovia. The UN estimates

Up against heavy odds

A young-looking septuagenarian, the United Na-. tions Secretary-General Boutros Ghali looked indefatigable steering round-table discussions next to an equally purposeful Abdel-Moneim Said, director of the Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies. Ghali was under-standably protective of the world body. The UN has no separate entity or will apart from those of the 185 member states that make up the world body. There is no new world order yet. It is up to member states to collectively agree on launching a new world order," he said

In their 1996 report, Human Rights Watch described Boutros Chali as the "numble servant of 185 masters who cannot mask [his] abdication of leadership in the human rights realm". He brushes aside such criticism. "We need to view this in the context of steady effort," the secretary-general said. Is it not conviction and courage, rather than servility and indecision, that have carried him beyond the constraints of most mortals' expectations? At the seminar, one glimpsed something of the steely resolve that has carried him to the top. He made no bones about the fact that the UN

suffers a crisis of credibility. Long-time detractors of the UN secretary-general looked on with undisguised giee as the UN failed mis-erably to usher in peace in the Balkans, virtually vacating the arena to beat a hasty retreat and al-low the American-led North Atlantic Treaty Orgamisation (NATO) to dictate the terms of peace.

"The role of the secretary-general is to implement the decisions of the Security Council," the secretary-general said.

The mid-1990s are a time to look forward to change. Boutros Ghali jooked as likely a can-didate as any to break the impasse over how to go about changing the world for the better. Gha-li was unyielding in his insistence that there is increased interest in social problems among the UN member states.

In spite of bureaucratic and financial constraints, the UN is coordinating a comprehensive strategy for social and environmental development. The UN secretary-general made reference to the Rio de Janiero, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing conferences and the forthcoming Habitat II Conference in Istanbul.

"The democratisation of international relations is not on offer. Five decades ago, when the UN was founded, decolonisation was not on the cards. Today we have narco-terrorism, religious terrorism, the mafia, and the state is threatened from within," he said. "I believe, above all, that the UN must be a think-tank to try to prepare solutions for the problems of tomorrow. Because

Gamal Nkrumah listened to UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali at a seminar organised by the Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies on what gives definition to the world body under his leadership

problems. Who was aware of the environment 20 years ago? Who was aware of transnational crime?" he queried the participants.

The Vienna-based UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch are engaged in a number of pro-jects worldwide ranging from the prevention and control of money laundering to fighting organ-

of globalisation, we will be confronted by new

ised crime and improving the operational instruments for combating international crime as well as resolving drug-related social problems. The UN also provides technical assistance to member states upon request in order to promote criminal and legislative reform.

The UN International Drug Control Pro-

gramme works closely with the Centre for Human Rights. Big powers have increasingly used the human rights issue to withbold aid. Human rights have become a most contentious issue in international relations, Ghali noted. In what sounded like a well-rehearsed and thoughtful lecture, Ghali urged the Third World to stay the course with democracy — egged on by economie liberalisation. One detected something of the determination to reform and restructure not just the UN, but the world which has assured his own place in history.

There are currently 70,000 UN peacekeepers in the field. "Every conflict has its own peculiarities," the secretary-general said. "We can never learn from past conflicts, because every conflict is unique," he explained.
"The most important aspect of conflict resolu-

tion is the warring parties' political will to stop the conflict," he said. "Without the political will to resolve a conflict, all our peacemaking efforts are in vain," he stressed. "In Angola, there was the political will to resolve Africa's longest running civil war. Opposition leader [Jonas] Savimbi and President [Eduardo] Dos Santos of Angola wanted to end the conflict," he said. "In Somalia, 11 different 'governments' exist side by side. And, in Cambodia there were two rival governments, yet when there was a political will there was a way to resolve the conflict there," Ghali pointed out.

Ghali called for a reassessment of certain big powers' non-committal policy towards the UN. He had America, Germany and Japan in mind. Ghali was working to pull the world together behind a powerful UN, he assured his listeners. The US tops the peacekeeping debts list and owes \$1.4 billion to the UN — more than 40 per cent of the total bill for outstanding contributions. There is a crisis of confidence concerning the UN. The world body has incurred \$3,330 million in debts. We still have not been able to solve our financial crisis. The member states owe us around \$2.6 billion. They owe in addition approximately \$1 billion for the UN opera-

tions in the former Yugoslavia," Ghali said.
Ghali quoted Ghana's President Jerry John Rawlings as saying that the world spends \$5 million per day in the former Yugoslavia, while it can only spare \$25 million a year in Liberia. The secretary-general explained that the war in Liberia is as vicious as the war in the Balkans. He said that part of his mission was to draw attention to what he termed the "orphan situations" in places like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Bu-

rundi, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Was there a surprise there? No. Despite some feebly floating rumours to the contrary, he was doing his best to publicise the plight of people from war-torn nations, he assured his listeners.

The UN had been outmaneuvered in the Balkans, just as the US had been humbled in Somalia. There was the tense standoff with the Somali warlords and the death of the 18 American Rangers at the hands of General Mohamed Aid-

The chance to practice the necessary diplomatie arts of compromise and conciliation was missed in Somalia. But Ghali stuck to his plans for averting another disaster in Africa. This week, he dispatched the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, to Burundi to lobby for peace and alleviate political tensions. "To ease ethnic and political tensions costs money and nobody is prepared to pay the necessary amount to have a UN presence on the ground," be remonstrated.

The UN is dealing with member states. Iraq is a member state of this organisation [the UN]. My role is limited to implementation in accordance with a mandate given to me by the Security Council. My role is limited to implementing Resolution 986 (1995) — food for oil — and my contact with the Iraqis is limited to obtaining a way to implement this resolution," the secretary-general said. "May I also mention something else which is important?" he asked. "It is that we have created an organ in Geneva which is to give an indemnity to three or four million workers from India, from Pakistan, from the Philippines, from Kuwait, from Jordan, from Egypt, They lost their jobs during the Gulf War, they lost their personal belongings," Ghali emphasised.

"This Compensation Commission has no money. In the case that Resolution 986 (1995) is implemented, 30 per cent of the revenue from the oil will be given to this Commission, and we will he able to offer compensation to the thousands of workers all over the Third World," he

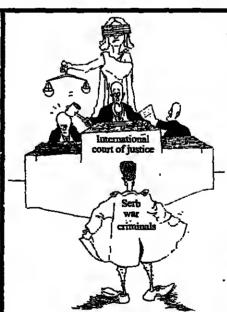
"So it is not altruistic. Certainly my number one priority is that the people of Iraq are suf-fering. But there is a second very important element; we need money to be able to pay com-pensation to the millions of workers who have lost their jobs and who lost many things during the Iraq-Kuwait war," he explained.

"America no longer controls the dollar - the world market does. The authority of the nationstate will diminish in the next few years," Ghali predicted. But, we live in a world where the anthoritarian pulse of America still beats in the arena of international relations, he intimated. According to Boutros Ghali, the UN is not ignoring the Third World's entreaties for attention. "African leaders feel marginalised; the perception is a very negative one: that nobody is paying attention to Africa anymore," he explained. His recent tour of West Africa was party to dispel this negative perception, be said.

Small wonder the UN Department of Information has embarked on using radio and television as cost-effective media tools of its global outreach activities. "Currently, 29 programmes in 15 languages are being sent to broadcasters worldwide," he said. The secretary-general's Blue Books Series on peacekeeping, peacemaking and development issues are a new activity of the department that has left the indelible mark of Boutros Ghali on the UN.

"The World Bank now looks into my suggestions of the different country categorisations," Ghali mused. "I impressed upon World Bank officials that the world is not divided just into developed and developing countries, but war-torn countries are a special classification unto themselves," he added. "I still have 12, or let us say 11, months," be said. "To be a civil screant is to be trained that nobody will say, 'Thank you'. We are doing our job," he said. It is better to be blinded by Blue Books than hoodwinked by Blue Helmets.







French labour pains

It appears that there has been a revival of social struggles in France. What is involved exactly? Aguiton: There has, indeed, been a re-

vival of struggles. They have now been going on for more than a year, since the first strikes took place before the election of President Jacques Chirac.

These struggles have several origins; a wish to recover the purchasing power eroded by the crisis of these last few years (the strike at the Alsthom industrial equipment company which manufactured cars for Cairo Metro); a wish to protect public services threatened by the European Union's liberalisation drive (France Telecom, the railways and electricity all face privatisation efforts); and a wish to protect social welfare in general including pensions,

health and memployment insurance. In all these cases there is resistance to the policies that Paris, as well as Brussels, have adopted to deal with the crisis.

Is there united action among the different labour federations? Harris: For several years, there was no thousand people in France who no longer united action. But the announcement have a home or are on the way to losing

made by the Juppé government to freeze the salaries of civil servants served as a catalyst for a general union strike on 10 October 1995,

The numbers of strikers even surpassed, in certain sectors, those seen in [the student-worker strikes of 1968.

Unfortunately, the larger union confederations were again divided on the follow-up to 10 October. Some wanted to negotiate wage increases in return for concessions made by workers in changes to working hours. Others boped to obtain these increases without yielding anything m return.

Is there a link between the movement for the marginalised and the workers' movement?

Aguiton: One of the most important events of these last few years has been the appearance of the movement for the marginalised. Associations for the unemployed have been strengthened, especially concerning the burning question of housing. There are several hundred

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theirs. Two associations, the Droit au logement (Right to Housing) and the Comité des sans-logis (Homeless Committee), have been created and become renowned for requisitioning empty apartment blocks.

Relations with the workers movement did not come about spontaneously. The crisis has lasted 20 years, unemployment has become a permanent feature and the new jobs created are precarious ones -short-term contracts or part-time work. The unions primarily organise workers with secure status who work in large companies. These peoples' preoccupations are not identical to those of the long-term unemployed or of people in transit from one "minor job" to another.

A movement was created to bring together the struggles of the unemployed and the marginalised and those of the workers. "Act together against unemployment" groups together the trade unions and the associations for the unemployed and the marginalised to fight against imemployment. The movement battles, in particular, for the reduction of working hours.





Christopher Aguiton, an official in the Solidarité Unité Démocratie-Poste Tél-

écom Télégramme (SUD-PTT) union, and Marianne Harris, a local union mil-

itant in the Conféderation Féderale Démocratique des Travailleurs (CFDT).

talk to Hosni Abdel-Rehim about the power of the unions to effect change

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Autonomy and anathema

A potential pitfall in any series of negotiations, such as those between the PNA and Israel that have led to the establishment of the self-rule areas, is that one side may misunderstand the other's tacit, or not so tacit, intentions. For example, in seeking to put into effect the autonomy granted the Palestinians fol-lowing the Oslo II talks, Arafat may have deemed it his responsibility to ensure the security of those residing in the selfrule areas. He may even have gone so far as to listen carefully when Israel made its continued withdrawal from the Occupied Territories conditional on how well he shoulders this security

Therefore, it probably came as an unwelcome surprise to the Palestinian leader when Hamas activist Yehya Ayyash was killed by an exploding mobile phone last Friday. The assassina-tion of Ayyash, also known as "the Engineer", understandably prompted a wave of protest from Hamas supporters and other Palestinians. The aftershocks of the killing, however, have gone beyond the chanting of slogans and screams of bloody murder. For Arafat, the repercussions will be dire, especially at a time when be is struggling to maintain a tennous balance between rejectionist Palestinians and those who favour peace. Ha mas leaders, who are opposed to, and are boycotting the elec-

tions, have blamed Arafat for failing to stay Israel's hand.
While Israeli officials have so far refused to accept responsibility for the assassination, Israeli newspapers have confirmed that Shin Beit had its hand on the trigger that Peres ordered be pulled. Official denials aside, the damage is done. The five-month long stay in hostilities initiated by Hamas from the self-rule areas is sure now to come to an end. This will be a ma-

sent-rule areas is sure now to come to an end. Ints will be a major setback for Arafat as he tries to guide the Palestinians through their first democratic elections. And for peace between Israel and Syria, it could pose a major stumbling block.

Showing little regret for the slaying of "the Engineer", Israel's Police Minister Moshe Shahal, quoted a passage from the Bible: "He who lives by the sword, dies by the sword." True perhaps, but by killing Ayyash how many other deaths have been engineered?

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Direct: (202) 5786078 Fax: (202) 5786833-5786089 The morphology of pan-Arabism

Mohamed Sid-Ahmed discusses whether pan-Arabism can survive Aithuser, the most famous French Marxist philosopher in the sixties, was the first to come forward with without serious reconsideration of the foundations on which it is built what, to my mind, was the break-

through discovery that Marx had been not one, but multiple. There was the young Marx imbued with Hegelianism, then the mature Marx of Das ceed from the premise that it should always be marked by invariance, whatever the circumstances.

Kapital, finally the elderly Marx. But most people who have embraced Marxist ideology tend to perceive him as an indivisible whole and disregard his evolution as a thinker. Over the years, many schools of thought have attributed themselves to

Marxism, then to Marxism-Leninism. When ideological conflicts empted between them, each would invoke quotations from Marx to rebut the arguments of other Marxist schools. But such a procedure was based on the as-sumption that Marx's thinking always remained consistent towards itself and never changed, which, of course, was not true. And this is where Althuser's discovery proved to be so pertinent.

Actually, Althuser's approach did not apply to Marxism only, but to all ideological edifices that are used to. justify a given line of political ac-tivism. What applies to Marxism applies just as much to the ideology of pan-Arabism. Indeed, various pan-Arabist schools, particularly the Basth, have done much to idealise pan-Arabism and to endow it with invariability over space and time: "From the Ocean to the Gulf", "From the beginning (azal) to the end (abad) of time." But pan-Arabism, like all

other frames of thinking, has had its ups and downs, and Arabs cannot pro-

The pan-Arab idea is predicated on the notion that there exists an Arab Nation with specificities of its own, and that the Arabs' allegiance to that Nation transcends whatever other allegiances they may have, whether to smaller entities, such as loyalty to a given Arab state, or to a larger entity, such as an Islamic Nation. Pan-Arabism does not distinguish between Arabs on the basis of religion, ethnic-

ity, nationality or otherwise.

The idea of the Arab Nation was derived by the founders of pan-Arab ideology from the idea of the nation-state in Europe. They introduced it to fill nn created by the breakdown of the Ottoman Caliphate in Istanbul, and to protect minorities in the Arab world from new forms of dis-crimination. It was no accident that pan-Arab ideology first emerged in the Levant, a mountainous region where many Arab minorities sought

refuge over the centuries. The concept went through many stages. First came the theoretical stage, in which the new idea was preached as a substitute for a post-Caliphate Islamic Nation at a time Attaturk's takeover of power in Turkey political rationale without exposing it-in the aftermath of World War I had self to the danger of total collapse. deprived it of a centre of gravity. The advocates of an Arab Nation took Garibaldi's unification of the Italian nation and Bismark's of the German as models to be followed. ..

Then came the second stage of practical implementation in the wake of World War II, when two events, namely, the creation of the state of Israel and the anti-colonial struggle, gave pan-Arab solidarity new impetus, first, to stand up to the frag-mentation of Arab land by a variety of colonial powers (Great Britain, France, Italy) and, second, to the usurpation of Arab Palestine by the Zion-ists. The latter issue addressed the very existence of a pan-Arab entity, not the determination of its boun-

This second stage came to a sudden halt with the '67 defeat and the passing of Security Council resolution 242, which called for 'the elimination of the consequences of the aggression' - not for the elimination of the state of Israel - and the exchange of (the) territories occupied in 1967 for peace with Israel. Thus began a third stage, where pan-Arabism could no longer cling to its previous un-compromising and absolute character

self to the danger of total collapse. Some have tried to circumvent this conceptual impasse by describing the ongoing peace process as only a temporary arrangement to be reconsidered as and when objective conditions permit.

But if it is true that the projected settlement will never be able to saisfy all the opponents of peace in the region, including in Israel, it is also true that a definitive settlement need not entail the total uprooting of the state of Israel. One can consider the possibility, if only as a theoretical as-sumption, of an Israel whose presence in the region is more beneficial to its Arab environment than its absence. But the conditions that pan-Arab nationalism will have to formulate to impose on Israel this accommodation with its environment are still to be discovered, failing, which pan-Arabism is threatened with the danger

of collapsing as an ideology in the face of a resurgent pan-Islamism. The de-absolutisation of pan-Arabism should not deprive the Arabs of the links and affinities they have succeeded in establishing over the ages in the name of pan-Arabism. But . they should also be aware of the vulnerabilities of pan-Arab ideology. After all, the Arab Nation is not the

product of an economic infrastructure, 2 a common market, as is the case of \$2 the European nations, but, rather, of a common language which, because of sacred text, the Qur'an, has survived over the centuries to produce " the essence of what is known as Arab civilisation. It is no accident that Israel has resorted to the idea of a Middie East market as its main tool to undermine pan-Arabism, because it. knows that the economic dimension is its most vulnerable point. This year, on the occasion of the hundredth an-Biversary of Herzl's book, The Jewish State, Israel plans to discuss means of applating Zionism in line with the new conditions of peace in the region. This confronts the Arabs with the need to

In this connection, it is interesting to question whether any specific meaning should be given to the fact that Egypt's new prime minister, who served as minister for planning for over a decade, is now called upon to remove the obstacles impeding privatisation, the very antithesis of planning. It is also interesting to note that the notion of planning is closely linked to Nasser's (pan-Arab) approach to politics. Is this no more than a coincidence at a time the govern-ment is in search of an ideology that is neither unbridled liberalism serving Israel's 'Middle East market' approach, nor Islamic fundamentalis that is adopted by a variety of terrorist groups throughout the region? . .

undate pan-Arabism as a condition for

Oceanic opportunities

The end of the Cold War has irrevocably altered the shape of international relations, and one of the most noticeable changes has been the tendency of those countries sharing oceans and seas to embark upon regional collaboration projects. The purpose is to exploit oceanic resources jointly, to work to centrol pollution and to combat various forms of crime, such as pi-racy and drug-trafficking. Ex-amples include the Black Sea Organisation, the Asia-Pacific Economie Cooperation, the Mediterranean Forum, and the Euro-Mediterranean Intiative, all being instances of this new form of inter-

national cooncration. Last month I was invited by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust (IGMT) to attend a conference devoted to the idea of establishing an Indian Ocean Community (IOC). I was not surprised to learn that India, in collaboration with other major Indian Ocean countries, is trying to establish such a community, since this fits the pattern that I have described very well. What really astonished me was the amount of progress that had been achieved in just one year (1995) to develop the proposal and to turn it into a reality. I was also favorably impressed by the quantity of effort that had been put into thinking through the concept of an IOC: in Australia an Indian Ocean Centre has been established, and in India a journal, the Journal of Indian Ocean Studies founded, to name but two examples. The IGMT conference was attended by repre-sentatives of most Indian Ocean states. The fact that an Egyptian representative was also invited indicates that these states consider Egypt to be a partner in this pro-

The notion of an IOC developed over the last five years, mainly at the academic and business levels. The first formal meeting to discuss

This week the press focused on

inct. On Friday, Ibrahim Na-

fie, editor-in-chief of Al-

Ahram, wrote in an article en-

titled "The reality of change ac-

cording to the challenges":

"Constructive change is a prod-

uct of valid reasoning, not a re-sponse to the ostensible wishes

of the masses. Change in itself

does not solve problems or

achieve progress. In some cases

and under certain circum-

stances change can be a step backwards and a hindrance to

national action.

On Saturday Sal-

ducing new ele-

retaining old ones

sponsibility.

who experienced economic re-

form from its inception. This

leads us to think that there is no

change in the new govern-

ment's objectives. It is certain

that the success or failure of the

new government depends on

the participation of the people in shouldering the re-

eration between the prime min-

ister and public opinion and the

press to reach policies and de-

cisions that are far removed

Al-Mussawar magazine pub-

lished the news of the forma-

tion of the new cabinet without

from surprises and shocks."

"This means closer coop-

The proposed Indian Ocean Community holds opportunities that Egypt cannot afford to miss, argues Mohamed El-Sayed Selim

the idea was held in Mauritius in March 1995 at the initiative of seven core countries, namely Australia, India, Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius, Oman and Singapore. Another meeting was held in June of the same year in Perth, Australia, and at both meetings government representatives, academics, and businessmen met in their individual capacities to discuss the various aspects of the planned cooperation. The third meeting in would support the free flow of information, and would work for rethe series was held again in Mauritius in August, 1995. At this meeting, discussions were held to gional economie integration. prepare a Charter for an Indian Ocean Regional Economic Association, and India was entrusted with the task of drawing up its provisions. An Indian Ocean Regional Academic Group was also established with a view to promoting

links between the academic institutions of the region. The New Delhi meeting of December 1995 represents the fourth in the series. So what were the main issues that this meeting convened to dis-cuss? Perhaps the main topic for debate was the geographical spread of the Indian Ocean region. Whereas the Indian and South African graphical definition, which would include all those countries which had shores onto the Indian Ocean, together with states in the hinterland that use ports onto it, the Australians argued for a narrower definition that included only the major Indian Ocean powers, such as India, South Africa, and Indonesia. The Indian delegation, however contended that eventually the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf states would also have to be included in the pro-

The second main issue under discussion was the question of what. the basic principles of such a community would be. Here there was agreement: the national sovereignty, geographical integrity and cultural independence of the member states would be stressed. There was also agreement that the Community would adhere to a liberal trade and investment system,

It was widely agreed that the Community would be the focus, at least in its initial stages, of socio-economic cooperation. The areas cited were those related to agricultural and rural development, to business joint ventures, to scientific and technological cooperation in the areas, for example, of food-processing, biotechnology, entrepreneurship, to the foundation of an Indian Ocean Regional Clearance Union, and to cooperation in the exploitation of the resources of the ocean bed. India added the foundation of a formal 'Indian Ocean Peace Zone' to the list of priorities; at the New Delhi meeturally have to include a security agreement to prevent the further spread of small arms to the region, which, as was proved during the conflict in Afghanistan, is a prime source of destabilisation in the re-

veloped.

gion. Mechanisms to control drug-

trafficking and to enhance the se-

curity of the smaller states in the

area would also have to be de-

the importance of the socioeconomic issues, they did not reach agreement on the structures? of the proposed community, or on . its rules of membership. Further, by virtue of their membership of other regional forums, some coun-. tries, such as Indonesia, were less fully supportive of the idea of a new regional grouping. They pleaded for a more cautious approach to the foundation of the new grouping that would benefit more from examining other pos-

However, despite these areas of disagreement, I have no doubt that a the IOC proposal will be translated into reality in 1996. Egypt, there-fore, would be well advised to start thinking about the implications of the new grouping on its economy; and to begin devising strategies to benefit from the new venture. The foundation of the IOC would be likely to redirect trade in the region, and, as a result, reduce trade with non-IOC members. It is also likely to have large results as far as the exploitation of ocean resources: is concerned. We should monitor this new venture and establish an early partnership with it, possibly as an associate member, or even as a fully fledged member of it. India . does not object to this eventuality. We could also approach the IOC ing, an Indian delegate argued that with a view to sharing our ex-Egypt could offer its organ-isational experience on how to develop regional cocoperation, and could emerge as a 'linking power' between the states of the Mediterranean and those of the Indian: Ocean. Our participation in the meetings planned for 1996 should be a priority, if only so that we:: may know what the future holds.

Whereas the participants at New The writer is director of the Centre Delhi were almost unanimous in for Asian Studies at Cairo Uni-their support for the IOC pro-versity.

Two challenges, one reply

By Naguib Mahfouz

The resignation of the prime minister and the cabinet changes highlight two of the most important matters we face as the century draws to a close. How is Egypt going to cope with the coming century, and how will it secure improvements in the

quality of life for those on low incomes? Advances already made in information technology will pale in comparison to those that will come in the next century. The computer will be all powerful, and we will all be enmeshed in the internet, with unrestricted access to all the information we desire, or for that matter, do not desire. Without taking on board the far-reaching implications of the information revolution, if will be impossible to guarantee our future, even in the

short term.

And what of the procest members of our society? How are we to improve their lot? There are, of course, no easy answers, though it would seem to me that answers must be found since it is only by alleviating poverty and distress that we can hope to esablish what I would term communal peace.

Now these two pressing issues — how to cope with technological advances, particularly in the field of information, and how society are in fact interrelated. They both demand that we make streonous efforts to improve the quality and content of the education that is offered our young people. It is not too simplistic to state that unemployment is a major impetus to terrorism --- make people employable, gainfully, and you are well on your way to eradicating terrorism. Underline that advance by staging an intensive, anti-corruption campaign and the winning post is in sight.

Based on an interview with Mohamed Salmawy.

The Press This Week

By Hassan Fouad

ment and people for there is no itor-in-chief Ragab El-Banna doubt that something apwrote a three-page article enproaching war exists between titled "Why Ganzouni?" in which he said, "As always, forthe two. The two do not trust

rection and one of revision of

change in Egypt's policies. emment is not policies but its work methodology aimed at

eign observers have imagined

that the cabinet reshuffle sig-nifies a change in political di-

certain policies. And, as al-

ways, President Mubarak has

been clear and frank in as-

certaining that there is no

ama Ahmed SalThe new cabinet is not quite new. It rehad reached firstama wrote in his daily Al-Ahram flects a desire for change and one for grade democracy. Column a piece entitled "Not quite continuity, for introducing new elements need cooperation new" in which he while retaining old ones who ex- between all facsaid: "The new perienced economic reform from its in-tions. Egypt needs cabinet is not quize ception. This leads us to think that there not just some of desire for change is no change in the new government's them. It needs a and one for continuity, for intro- objectives'

Salama Ahmed Salama tivity. We need everything out in

bringing about achievements. The objectives are the same but the pace has become quicker. In short, this is a government of achievements, one which does not postpone solutions." On its front cover, October published a photograph of the new prime

In Al-Akhbar, Mustafa Amin wrote in his daily backpage column: "The new prime minister has inherited a legacy weighted down with debts. Repaying these debts is no easy matter --- it is impossible to put matters right in five minutes. He needs patience and so do the people. His first task is to bring about peace between governeach other and suspect each other's actions. The government has done nothing to win the opposition over. It has changed it from a rival to an enemy. The elections were an opportunity to close ranks and the people dreamt of a new era in which we move forward. But we moved backwards. We aspired to beginning the 21st century now but instead, we found

ourselves back in the democracy

the open and the people should feel they are partners and have the right to know everything. It is required of every Egyptian that he should take part in the building process and not be relegated to throwing stones or firing gums. We do not need swords to cut off heads, but we need writers and thinkers and working

In the same issue of Al-Akhbar the satiric writer Abmed Ragab said in his daily column: "I spent a long time thinking what has changed. The cabinet was that of Ahmed, now it has become Haj Ahmed's." On Saturday Ahmed Ragab, warming to the subject,

wrote in his page one column in Akhbar El-You under the title "Question marks": "How can we penalise the candidate who secured his seat with blood and has now become a respectable deputy? And will the re-spectable deputy allow his accomplices to be penalised? And if the investigating authorities request the lifting of his imminity, will the request not be granted as usual? And can the respectable deputy abandon his flues? Are not thuggery, violence and murder enough to cast doubt on the conduct of the

ment on Monday methodology pended appeals" in which he said: Parliamentary life

elections? And

a huge number of suits filed against election results: the number received by the Appeals Court until now is 950 suits. How can the judges deal with this flood of litigation at a time when we are complaining of the slowness of the judiciary before a pile-up of cases? This slowness has given the government the pretext of arraigning civilians before military courts: What will happen is that appeal courts counsellors will look into the accusations and forward their findings to the People's Assembly only to meet the same fate that has met previous his ministers drafting the letter findings — the People's As—of resignation and the other

sembly will freeze these rul with the president to get the goings. Those wronged will turn ahead for the new cabinet. In with the president to get the goto the judiciary once again to this dramatic fashion the cabdemand financial compensation inct change was brought and the state will pay out of the

No policy change

blood of the people. ... On Monday Mayo, the mouthpiece of the raling National Democratic Party, published exclusive statements by President Hosni Mubarak on the new cabinet in which he said: "The cabinet resimfle which took place was given the consideration and was the subject of serious study. I start-

ed to think about it last summer about an atternative, how would flux come should we not re-spect the rulings of As always, foreign observers have im-spect the rulings of the Appeals Court agined that the cabinet reshuffle signifies course not it must looking into electron a revision of certain policies. And as ale be through dention majoractices? And on the elec- ways, President Mubarak has been clear even then, I do not tion suits filed, Al- in ascertaining that there is no change in see viable al-Wald editor-in-chief Gamal Ba- Egypt's policies. What is new in the gov-litical parties in dawi wrote a com- ernment is not its policies, but its work Egypt are rem-

Ragab El-Banna practical

in Egypt has not witnessed such so that work in the new phase would proceed on the proper bases. I did not wish to announce the change beforehand in the public's interest and so that work would continue without any snags."
As for Al-Arabi newspaper,

the mouthpiece of the Nasserist Party, its red banner headline on Monday read: "The true secrets behind Ganzouri's cabinet." Its editor-in-chief, Mahmond El-Maraghi, wrote:
"Between 7pm and 8pm on Tnesday evening, 2 January, there were two prime ministers: one in the conference hall with

launching of his new book, Se-cret Channels: Arab-Israeli Negotiations. In the interview, Heikal said: "President Mu-barak is today in a position of sufficity. If we begin to think

On Sunday and Monday, Al-Ahrar published excepts from

the interview given by Mo-hamed Hassanein Heikal to the

BBC on the occasion of the

nants of the past. perience in the ex-

ercise of power. "The NDP is the remnant of the Arab Socialist Union and the National Union. It includes those who wish to be close to the centres of power. The Wafd Party is a faded image of the days of Mustafa El-Nahes and Saad Zaghloul. The Labour Party is a diminutive Masr El-Fataa and the Muslim Brotherhood is

ODCE Was. "Moreover, I have complete confidence in President Mu-barak and I fully support him. I do not want Egypt to enter into a series of misadventures. The crucial issue is not new alternatives, but a need for the

a replica in miniature of what it

هكذاءن رالإعل

bands."

A Street or any

reply

By Nagub Malife

- - - - - - - - -

y change

M. C. Barrell

New York

Close up

11 - 17 January 1996

Salama A. Salama

Living with Mossad

Clearly peace, as the Israelis understand it, coustitutes a continuation of conflict in different forms. It does not seem to imply the establishment of coopcration and neighbourly relations. Normalisation, it would appear, does not preclude spying, the clim-mation of the opposition, placing explosives or drug-running. These, it seems, are all elements of the co-existence that the Arabs are expected to en-

week which reinforce this conclusion. First the assassination of Yehia Ayyash, the Hamas leader suspected by Israel as being the mastermind behind many of the suicide operations carried out during the last few years. When a mobile phone exploded, killing Ayyash, Israel was the first to amounce the news and to congratulate itself, just as it had when Fathi Shaqaqi was as-sassinated in Malta several months ago. The Israeli intelligence services were. responsible for both ac-

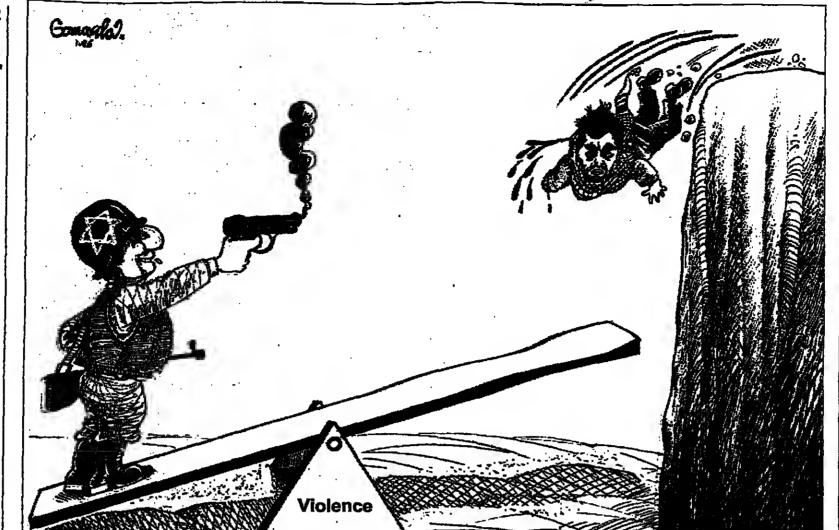
The timing of Ayyash'a assassination was not haphazard, nor was it merely an act of vendetta, an at-tempt to get rid of a Palestinian responsible for a series of suicidal operations that claimed many Israeli lives. It occurred, after all, at a critical phase in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, just as general elections are about to legitimise Arafat and the Palestinian National Authority, and after Arafat had himself been trying to come to an understanding with the opponents of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, led by Hamas, that would end internecine squabbles.

Israel, seeking to sabotage this phase of the agreement and thus delay final negotiations, and seeking too to place the blame for any delay on the shoulders of the Pal-TOOK TOX portunity to murder Ayysh and thereby reignited the conflict between Arafat and his opposition.

Israel has thus managed to poison the atmosphere in a manner designed to encourage increasing divisiveness between Palestinians. Israel'a actions also allow Shimon Peres to prove to the Israeli opposition, and to extremists in Israel, that the long arm of the military is still capable of destroying its enemics, wherever they may

Israel seeks to impose the peace that will suit it. This conclusion is lent further weight by an event that took place in Egypt. During interrogation, an Israeli agent suspected of spying on military secrets for Mossad and of peddling beroin, turned out to be one of the "Palestiman collaborators" on whom Israel has conferred its protection. This revelation, widely reported in the Egyptian press, lies behind recent protests by the new Israeli foreign minister against the Egyptian

It is only natural for Israel to protest against criticism in the Egyptian press. The connection between Israeli terrorism and Israeli claims to desire peace seem less natural. And one consequence of such unnatural linkage is the urgent necessity of Arab security systems to review Israeli activities, and the activities of their Palestinian collaborators, at a time when Israel's professed desires for peace increasingly seem sperious.



Soapbox

Enlightenment or fraud?

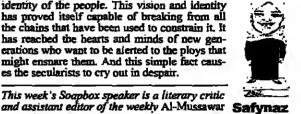
Egyptian and Arab culture, since at least the beginning of the century, has followed two trends. The early adherents of one of these trends, secularists oriented towards Western culture, awarded themselves the self-congranulatory title "the genera-tion of the enlightenment". Others, though, have been less flat-tering, seeing in the secularists nothing but imitators of the West, cultural carpetbaggers carrying in their baggage the Pandora's box that would contrive, once its contents were un-leashed, to strip Egypt of its cultural specificity and detail any resurgence inspired by the country's Arab-Islamic essence.

The second trend has and is formed by Arab Islamists, who hold aloft the banner of resistance to any encroachments on the Arab-Egyptian essence of our national culture. The Arab Islamic pulse that they represent is found resonant by the majority of our population, which cannot be said for the secular Arabism, disassociated from religion, touted by the Baath Party and Camal Abdel-Nasser.

It is the Arab Islamists who have been in the forefront of the battle to uphold literary and artistic culture. Yet leading Arab-Islamists seem to be mentioned by the media only as they are being co-opted by the secularists. This should come as no surprise, given that today's media was born secular and, since its inception, has been manipulated to promote only secularist ideas.

The secularists continue to control the media, and hence have a huge propaganda advantage over their opponents. Indeed, it is the secularists who control all the keys to education, culture and the media. Yet still they are incapable of extinguishing the Islamic vision and cultural identity of the people. This vision and identity has proved itself capable of breaking from all the chains that have been used to constrain it. It has reached the hearts and minds of new generations who want to be alerted to the ploys that

es the secularists to cry out in despair. This week's Soapbox speaker is a literary critic and assistant editor of the weekly Al-Mussawar



An ambiguous harvest of terror

Last year's final months saw a series of disparate terrorist attacks. What holds these events to-

gether is the fatal dialectic between state and terror that they reveal, argues Eqbal Ahmad

October and November, 1995 were memorable months in one respect: there was terror or the threat of terror all around us. For the purposes of our discussion, which concerns the dialectic between the state and terrotism, we will recall here the cases of Aimal Kansi, three events in Pakistan, and Yitzhak Rabin'a assassination.

The United States government has been advertising handsome rewards for information leading to the capture of Mir Aimal Kansi, The Pakistani is the prime suspect in the murder, on 25 January, 1993, of two CIA employees outside the agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia. He is also accused of wounding three others. Mystery surrounds Kaner's case. His precime ware I specie. Kansi's case. His victims were Lansing C. Bennet, who was described in a Washington Post story as a "physician and intelligence analyst for the CIA", and Frank Darling, who was "assigned to tasks involving covert operations". Two of the injured were also identified as CIA agents.

Kansi obviously knew his men. He approached their cars at the stop light on Dolly Madison Boulevard, barely 500 yards from the gate of the CIA's 258-acre beadquarters in Langley, shot them at close range, inches ows of their cars. woman passenger, and sped away. The next day he was reported to have fled to Pakistan from the National Airport, a Washington D.C. fish bowl. His Pakistani passport had expired in March 1992, and, according to Pakistani officials, had not been renewed. So what did he travel on?

Atmal Kansi's life in the US also had its mysterious aspects. On arrival in March 1991 — on a business visa — he was spared the usual procedure for aliens entering the country. No one would say why. He requested political asylum - in 1991 - and was granted a renewable one-year work permit, which he did not renew. He was employed in an outfit, Excel Courier Inc., on a salary of \$700 a week, an unusual windfall for one with limited qualifications and scant record of employment in the U.S. The company is owned by Chris Marchetti, son of Victor Marchetti, a former CIA official who had once been an aide to its director, Richard

Helms. The Kansi family lives in Quetta, a city from which the CIA had engaged in covert operations, and had left behind a lot of disgruntled clients. Our second case concerns Pakistan, which has played host during October-November to a mimber of terrorist events - two lucky escapes and one great atrocity. A group of army officers were arrested for planning a coup that would wipe out the top echelon of

the army, execute the president and prime minister, and impose upon the country an Islamic caliphate of inverted imagination. The officers elaimed to be patriots who intended merely to aid the struggle in Kashmir. Without waiting for justice to take its course, Pakistan's premier Islamic party expressed its solidarity with them. And as if this were not h. a group of ists entered human-rights lawyer Asma Jahangir's house with the intent, and equipment, to commit murder.

On 19 November, the earth trembled in Islamabad, trees shook, homes rattled, and people died in a terrorist attack. Three Islamic parties in Egypt took credit for this fool and heartless crime. The communiqué from the International Justice Group was notable for its graphic sadism: "The platoon of martyr Khaled Islanbuli executed an operation today which sent skulls, limbs and corpses flying, and leaving dozens dead and wounded at Egypt's diplomatic mission in Islamabad."

A number of powers in various parts of the world have yet to come to terms with the fact that the dead and wounded of 19 November were victims, not only of the extremists who

call themselves Islamie, but also of the opportunism, deception, and crimes of governments. This is a long though uncomplicated subject because the states which I mention here have spawned sectarian terror in multiple if crode ways. There is here neither space nor time to elaborate this point fully but what follows can be considered a few point-

With Mohammed Zia ul-Haq's and his co-horts' collaboration, the United States has helped to revitalise and internationalise the notion of armed Jihad in a manner and in senses that the Muslim world has not experienced in recent centuries. To add insult to injury, Washington has not only used armed Islamism as an instrument of its policy, but has also abandoned and denounced it after its purposes have been served. The current anti-Americanism of the Islamic movement is causal; it is by no means patholog-

kistan People's Party (PPP) no less than the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) - which came after Zia ul-Haq have continued to view opportunistically even the most sectarian and violent of Islamie parties. Thus both parties have variously coalesced with the Jamaa-i-Islami, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam, and the Anjuman-i-Sipah-i-Sahaba; both have failed to amend the worst features of the hlasphemy laws; both have shied away from repealing the Hudood Ordinances.

Moving on to my last case study, On 4 November, 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel was assassinated at a peace rally in Tel Aviv. Governments and the world media then praised Rabin as a peace maker who had paid the 'price of peace'. The assassin belonged to Eyal, a militant Zionist organisation committed

to the colonisation of territories captured by Israel in the 1967 war. The establishment of these settlements has been Israel's bipartisan policy since 1969, in which all Israeli governments, including those in which Rabin held high positions, actively promoted the settler movement, established and financed no less than 300 settlements in the Occupied Territories, forcibly expropriated large amounts of Arab land, diverted and deprived native people of their water re-sources, and let loose atmed Jewish zealots among a disarmed Muslim and Christian population - all in clear and flagrant violation of international law and agreements. This sordid record notwithstanding, Yitzhak Rabin and his government could still reasonably be described as 'peace makers' had the Oslo Agreements held for the dispossessed Palestinians some promise of restitution.

ameliorate these cruel injustices, and nothing whatsoever to roll back the illegal, officially of extremism in the Occupied Territories. The Zionist right does dislike the 'peace process', but only because it appears to limit the orbit of its sectarian ambitions and its hopes of expelling the remainder of Palestinians from their homes. Yitzhak Rabin paid the price not so much of peace making but of letting loose a monster he and his party are even now reluctant to disown, either politically or ideologically. The symbiosis of terror, ideology and statchood is so deeply rooted in Zionist tradition that it will decades to uproot it, even with a different model of peace making than that proposed by Oslo l & II. After all, among the saplings which have sorouted from these roots was the Likud, which has grown into one of Israel's two major parties.

The 'peace process', however, does little to

Extremism is now an integral part of Israeli state and society. Note the assassin's re-lations with the Israeli defence and intelligence services. Yigal Amir is not a fringe figure. He is, as columnist Zeev Schif put it, the "boy next door", a member of the elite Golani brigade in the Israeli Defence Force, an undercover agent of Shin Bet, an activist in the settler movement, and a law student at Bar Ilan University. The bullet which killed the Israeli prime minister came from the arsenal of the Israeli army. Naturally, conspiracy theories abound among Israelis, and most implicate their own secret services in the murder. Michael Harsagor, a respected historian at Tel Aviv University, concludes bluntly that "the attack could not have succeeded without the conspiracy of the security services." And Rabm's assassin has told the court ominously that the "Truth will turn Israel upside down".

For thoughtful Israelis this ought to serve as a painful moment of truth. For decades their state has engaged in organised terror over another people. To advance their agenda of colonising Palestine even Israel's 'liberal' pol-iticians — Ben Gurion, Golda Meir, Yitzbak Rabin, Shimon Peres — opportunistically fostered movements and ideas which were extremist in their beliefs, violent in their outlook, and deeply contemptuous of life and civilisation. And to consolidate their conquests and colonisation they are engaged, even today, in creating an apartheid peace on the occupied West Bank and in Jerusalem. Such an inverted agenda for peace can bring lasting peace neither between Jews and Arabs in Palestine nor in the heart of Israel itself.

The larger conclusion to be drawn is general, and is not confined to Israel alone. Sectarian movements rarely possess the virtues of patience, discipline of discourse, culture of analysis, or sense of security in a broad and complex environment. Hence, on the mildest scent of threat or the slightest suspicion of betrayal, they turn on friends and enemies alike, inwardly no less than outwardly.

A perfect panacea for all ills?

Regardless of the other important changes that the recent cabinet restruiffle has introduced, a basic observation to be made is the complete change that it marked in the group of ministers responsible for economic affairs - finance, planning, economy, and industry. A new minister of state for the economy has also been appointed. This catalogue of change, when added to the fact that the new prime minister, Kamal El-Ganzonri, was the former minister of planning, leads beyond a shadow of a doubt to the conclusion that the economy will be the main challenge

to face the new ministry.
In the light of President Mubarak's announcements during the period when the new cabinet was being and one can list a number of basic factors pertinent to Egypt's economic reform project: the rate of development is to be increased on the one hand, while the interests of the lower and middle-range income groups are to be protected.

Herein, then, lies the real challenge, or perhaps the real impasse, which many countries have reached in projects for economic reform that are based on the same triangulated virtues of the free market, free competition and individual enterprise. It is this project that has been exhaustively argued for over the past decade or so as being the perfect panacea for all economic ills, and the only means of attaining real development. Nevertheless, in a significant number of countries. it has reached an apparent dead-end, and this is as true in the developed as in the developing world - both in the West, with its deep historical experience of capitalism, and in the East, for which market forces and the

The new cabinet faces the onerous challenge of striking a necessary balance between economic reform and social development, writes Fathi Abdel-Fattah

free-market policies are still novelties. In all these projects, however, the missing consideration seems, uniformly, to have been the social dimension of development.

If we look to the United States, for example, we can see the development of the most significant battle in years over the economic direction the country should take. The clash is taking place between the Republican Party, which currently enjoys a majority in Congress, and the democratic president, Bill Clinton. The Republicans want to balance the federal budget by the year 2002, as part of what the party hawks call their "Contract with America." Clinton, on the other hand, opposes this general project, and has vetoed eight bills presented for his signature under its umbrella, describing it as a "contract for America's destruction," since it ignores the interests of middle and low income groups in American so-

Similarly, in France, public attention has recently been preoccupied by the prospect of wide-ranging strikes in protest against the government's plan to cut that part of the budget allotted to health and social services.

Even in countries already part of the free-market economy, such as the United States and France, economic reform projects that ignore social and human consequences are confronting major obstacles. What is currently hap-

pening in Russia, and in a number of Eastern European countries, must add to the already considerable sense of unease with which these policies must be greeted. We should be highly suspicious of economics that are based solely on market forces, free competition and the encour-

agement of private enterprise.

The results of the recent elections in Russia and in Poland attest to this. These results, and the situation in these two countries, have proved that economic reform that involves a shift from a socialist, planned economy, to a kind of basic capitalism, may be very difficult to effect - certainly far more so than the opposite conversion from canitalism to socialism.

In Egypt, as in a great oumber of developing countries, it is natural that problems should arise in implementing economic reforms that involve the shift from centralised planning and the state ownership of production, to capitalist 'open-door' type policies based on market forces and private entrepreneurship. This is all the more likely to be the case when we add unemployment, low development rates, and accumulating debt, which are global problems exacerbated by additional factors largely outside of state cootrol, such as in-creasing economic globalisation, and the growing power of multi-national companies. The increasing pace of scientific and technological change has also changed many of the rules of the game, even where the apologists of capitalism are concerned

Because of these challenges, a occessary balance should be struck in order to ensure that development is genuinely social development concerned with the individual. Ecocomie progress and true development cannot be realised in the shadow of widespread unemployment and the social and health problems that result from the kind of poverty that obstructs the potential of the individual, who should be the real creator, as well as the true beneficiary of develop-

Reformist economic projects are now facing a turningpoint, whether in the advanced capitalist countries, or in those making the transition from a planned to a nonplanned economy. They face a turning point too in the Third World, whose countries have been turned into a kind of field for economic experimentation. What is at least clear is that, world-wide, substantial attempts are currently being made to reach new agendas for economic progress distinct from the pervasive traditional concepts of socialism and of capitalism.

As it stands, we have confused the issue, and are caught between the free market and free competition on the one hand, and the need to guarantee basic provisions for the workforce on the other. I believe that it is this dilemma that will most challenge Dr El-Ganzouri and his new cahinet

The writer is the director of Al-Gomhouria's newspaper centre for strategic studies.

70 The Editor

Babylon ailing

Sir. The Iraqi people's disaster, resulting from the stringent UN sanctions imposed on their country, has transcended all acceptable limits. Meanwhile the Arab League seems unable to take a decisive and crucial stance with regards to the suffering of the Iraqi people.

President Saddam Hussein's greed could

abolish Iraqi youth's dreams for a better standard of living. The Iraqi people have paid a very dear price for a mistake made by their ruler. Hospitals and clinics are void of even the most basic first aid. There is no medicine or anesthetic available for surgical operations. Imagine the extent of the pain of the ill, particularly children, who must endure the pain of incision with-

Despite my anticipation of a US-led out anesthetic.

drive to postpone lifting the sanctions, in order to completely flatten the military mechanism of the Iraqi army, I think Iraq will succumb and abide by the UN resolutions as a positive step towards Arab reconciliation prior to Arab-Israeli reconciliation. I call upon the UN to dispatch envoys to assess the declined standard of living on the ground. The kingdom of Babylon will not pass by whatever challenges are before it.

Ashraf Faragallah Saad English Language Teacher Reni Suct

Antiquities alert

Sir-Let us pray that we are able to stop the exhibition of Egyptian antiquities in Amer-ica. I suspect Egypt is the only country in the world that exhibits its antiquities abroad

in exchange for merely a few dollars. her husband had told her there was no Enough damage has been caused by previons exhibits abroad, which no repairs can bring back to their pristine state. Egypt has been trying for years to convince the British Museum to return the Sphinx's beard, which cannot possibly be of any use to Britain.

So let us spare our antiquities from harm, and let us think long and hard before de-ciding to move Ramses' statue, so that we are certain it will not be damaged during its

Adel Boutros

Engineer Heliopolis

Racism doesn't help Sir- Leah Rabin, when asked why her hushend did not wear a bullet proof vest on the day of his assassination, replied that need because Israel is not Africa. The racism of that statement shocked me. As is evident from Rabin's murder, assassinations have nothing to do with the race of the assassin and everything to do with the popularity and love the leader inspires amongst his people. Whether in Africa or elsewhere, political leaders should learn from the ignorance of this statement. Ali Mohamed Selim

Port Said Positive force

Sir-Egypt's membership in the UN Security Council, as representative of Africa, would be of benefit to both African and Arab countries. Given Egypt's excellent relations with many countries of the world, Egypt could be a positive force in

dealing with such issues as the UN sanctions imposed on Libya and Iraq, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Middle East peace process. Sbazly Ismail Bahr

Unnecessary expences

Sir-1 would like to comment on the work being done to renovate the underpass before the airport on Salah Salem Street. I am baffled by the extravagant expense Egypt is paying to replace the tiles on the walls of the underpass with ceramic tiles. Is this really necessary? Do we really need to spend perhaps bundreds of thousands of pounds on minor renovations while, excuse my adage, people are starving? Mohamed Mansour

Zoo in shambles

Sir-I would appreciate it very much if a member of your staff could investigate the efforts being made to renovate the Giza zoo. I read in the papers that a new supervisor is heading a renovatioo effort intended to spruce up the dirty grounds.

If I may offer some suggestions, I think it is imperative that the animal cages be rebuilt and kept clean. Also, a hit more effort should be put into directing people around the grounds in an orderly fashion.

This would most definitely on cessitate the banning of all those bothersome vendors.

Hain Hall, Opera House. as above. 12

Am, Spec.
The Athensem Chamber Orchestra, and soleists Mark Grawel. Manel Molicidin and Giselle Herbert perform conducted by Sherif Molicidin.

Vielle and Calle Recital Sainli Hall, Opera House, as above. 13

Jan. Spor. Ahmod Ramzy and Khaled Abdallah

Cairo Symphony Orchestra Small Hall, Opera House, at above 11

Jan. dost. With Amr Abul-Nags on the horn and Salma Saduk on the violin.

Al-Ghouri Palece, Al-Hussein, Tel 354 9431. 14 & 15 Jan, 7pm.

Minute Carlo Bullet Main Hall, Opera House, Gestra Tel 342 0598. 11 & 13-13 Jan. 8pm.

A Night From A Thousand Nights
Al-Goodourlya Theatre, 12 Al-Gambaoriya St. Tel 391 9956, Until 18

Ass. Spra.
Musical wristen by Beissen Al-Tons;
and performed by Yohiz El-Fakharans,
Angham and Ali El-Haggar.

Al-Saherz (The Sorcerem)
The National Theatre, Al-Ataba, Tel
579 1778. Daily 9pm.

Al-Gaustir (The Chain) Al-Salam, Qasr Al-Almi St. Tel 355 2484. Daily 9pm.

AFFam, Ramper St. 1et 3/3 2444. Dml-p acc Mon. 9.90pm.

A man pays dearly for running against the president in the elections. Play by Mahmoud El-Toukhi, directed by Galal El-Sherkawi, starring Ahmed Bedeir and Nermine El-Fiqi.

Hezz Nawa'em (Nawa'em's Luck)

Al-Housuper, 16 Al-Ter'a Al-Boulogepa St. Tel 769 233. Daily exe Tues, 10pm.
Directed by Rozcia El-Balmassawoni, starring Dalal Abdel-Aziz, Mahannud El-Guiodi and So'ad Nasr.

Al-Za'lus (The Lender) Al-Harum, Pyramids Road, Giza, Tel 386 3952, Daily ext. Tues, 10pm. Mon

our Ya Siadna (With Your Perunission, Masters) Al-Farm, Rampes St. Tel 578 2444. Dui-

DANCE

THEATRE



Montserrat Caballé

photo: Sherif Sonbol

Celestial sister.

David Blake travels the Milky Way

Concert; Montserrat Caballé Cairo Opera Orchestra; Jose Collodo, conductor; Moin Hall, Coiro Opera House: 7 January

Where is she? She is over there. She is coming. The Caballé presence says l am here; this is it. Listen and look. Caballé is in her place, on yet another opera house stage.

Great singers are all crepuscular animals, ton beauoful to he human. They are creatures of the night, making their own light as Caballe does here. She's big and not young. These are in-valuable virtues. If they keep their voices, the older the great ones get, the cuter they become. Every ouance of the art of singing is made audible and visual in this instance.

Caballé's appearance is the closest relative of her voice. The two are wrapped around each other, parent to child. She is a hig lady, almost im-mense and immensely beautiful. She pads across the stage, her wrist and finger movements powerfully suave and fastidious, like her singing. A celestial monster, she excites before she has opened her mouth.

Take a good look at her. She is the last of her tribe; her planetary sisters are no longer around. Now she has taken her piace center-stage front and prepares herself. If you think all the husiness of opera a giggle, then re-member she is better at sending it up than anyone since Groucho Marx. She imitates herself hetter than anyone clse can do. She is disaster-proof and a super-model. She wears clothes better than the 9 foot tall skinnies. She knows how to decorate the product, herself, and stands oo the stage like a Marie de Medici.

Where does she come from? Spain, like Patti, Malibrian and the rest of the Garcia trihe of singers. The Spanish voice has power and beauty, hut - among aficionados its special fascination is its maestrea. This gives to their every vocal utterance a power of actuality, never empty noise. It is ex-

tremely erotic. Caballé has all these virtues. And the Cairo Opera Orchestra, under José Collado lived up to her demands. There was a complicity between diva, conductor and orchestra. The contract was to have a good time.

Theatre

Preparations and ovations are over. The performance has begun. She throws back her grandly sculpted head, the great throat cavern opens, and out comes the voice. It is one of the four supreme voices of the last part of the 20th century. It has all the glamour, the mystery and the insolent ease well, there she is, that's a voice,

Words won't do. She sang two Rossini scenes as openers, one from L'Assedio di Corinto, and the other from Tancredi, Warmup pieces. After the Baccanale from mson et Dalila for orchestra, the best piece from the first part of the programme was O mo hre immortelle from Gounod's opera Sappho. Opera is where Caballe helongs. This piece from the falcon repertoire allowed her to unleash some of the hig dark areas of the voice - not as powerfully as she did before, but still voluptuously smooth with limpid, heavenly soft high tones, floating and lunar.

The last part of the evening's programme consisted of Spanish songs and scenes by Serrano, Chapi and Caballero, with a gentle, witty per-formance of the Concion de Palomo from an opera by Barbieri. All these pieces were done with such ease and delicacy, it was difficult to realise how difficult and treacherous such things are to sing.

Caballe has nothing to hide as an artist. She is elemental, direct and wise like the angels who, from oo high, wink so knowingly at us. Her singing is all of a piece, a product of man strands, ethnic, academic and personal. The technique is invisible, the breath apparently eternal, the tone, forward but never loudly assertive. She does not actually sing --- she spins out audio mysteries which are composed for those like her into forms. But her greatest strength is to put all these elements into the troublesome battlefield of opera. For her, it is simple as speak-

Her transformation at the close of the programme crased the years. There she stood, much the same as always, giving her incomparable Adriana Lecouvreur. She can still stand in a vast space and efface it hy the sheer power and projection of her voice. We had at times the dark, aggressive majesty of Norma and Lucrezia, the tone that

could quieten multitudes. Its authority was operatically absolute.

Covent Garden, London, Vienna, New York are all shining places oo her necklace of unforgettable per-formances. Unforgettable Marschallin. Caballé will have on worries. The warmth and radiance of her personality

Symphonies 4: Gomal Abdel-Rahim, Introduction and Rondo Baladi; Tchaikovsky, Concerto No. I in B flat minor, piano soloist Moushira Issa: Sibelius. Symphony no I in D mojor; Moin Hall. Cairo Opera House; 5 Jonuory What happened to Moushira Issa's Porsche? The other two items of this concert arrived in proper style. Gamal Abdel-Rahim's music opened the concert and Sibelius's massive granite-

Cairo Symphony Orchestra: Great

faced surfaces closed it. Yussef El-Sisi, the maestro, took over the Cairo Symphony Orchestra and set an heroic And Issa? She occupied the central positioo and arrived oo foot. The cool,

powerful car she always drives was gone. So was her own cool over the top of the piano anyway.

Where were her cerebral octaves, stinging the keyboard, and the diver

hird accuracy of her pounces in climaxes? Issa is more an event than a pianist. In this age of the global trek Oscar winner pianists who soon tire around the edges, she's an original. A treasure of daring, hers is a flip solence at the rulers of lump land, Macho Piano County. The B flot minor should have been

What went wrong? The concerto is a well-used piece of old concert hall furniture; everyone has sat upon it and left mark. Custom has made it fashionable sleaze. Nothing new. But there are ways around this. Issa ignored the designer stubble that most performers delightedly bring out of the concerto. But what did she pro-

her unmasked ball. Sad, it was not.

ject? Was she trying out her own aesthetic surgery on this concerto? If so, the wrinkles and sags still showed bru-

In the first movement - ironically labelled ollegro non troppo e molto maestoso by its composer who had vain hopes in the speed at which most performers take it — the first of the problems arose. How far can you go with wrong notes? Or how far should you permit yourself to go with wrong notes? Cortot solved the problem. He grew legendary almost because of his wrong notes. Issa has not yet reached this exalted state. Too few wrong notes can be termed pedantic; too many, self indulgent. Issa tries to up-turn the classics and find, at any cost, a new angle. Mostly it works because almost everyone is beginning to hate the word "classical music". But it takes courage to turn the B flo1 minor into a rag-bag. Mayhe Issa had a grand aggressive design, but the fingers seemed

not to register the message The second movement was the most errant. It shoots about, taxing pianists' touch on the keyboard. Issa was like Petrouschka. Euphoria, damnation and unbearable tension. This was the most successful area she entered. Authentic

In the andante, not a tear squeezed from under any lid. Heroic dismissal: life is an open city bombed to rubble. Did Issa believe it or was she fed up? There was no cake io the kitchen even for the poor 10 eat in this B flot minor. Issa must have come in some sort of vehicle. She must have drove it up on to the pavement, got out and left it for the police — that's us — to clean up. Really very remarkable Issa. Courage to the end as the trash man rumhles towards you. It was exhausting. It was

The beginning of the concert had had a restful desert-like calm: sound, memories heard from far away, climate and continent unsure, a winter sunshine.

The Sibelius brought El-Sisi, alone, into another realm. He had been carrying on majestically. Now, like Issa, he faced his own mystery. Sibelius is stormy. Ups and downs like Bruckner hut shorter. The fashion swings have been hard on Sibelius, but like an unmeltable iceberg, he drifts silent and solid through the symphonic world, always a huge presence, never ignorable. El-Sisi enjoys tone, rich and deep.
The symphony was given this. The hig
cool object glided on unrecognisable.
In what age was it written? The Ice Age or the Fire? Mayhe, as the pundits

At the National, Nehad Selaiha

watches with dismay as The Witch

fails to get off the ground

Mannood Mannar Mannar Tahrir St. Gestra. Daily ext San and Mon. 9an-1.30pm.

A permanent collection of work by the seulptor Mahmood Mukhtar (d. 1934), whose granite monument to Saad. stands near Quar Al-Nil

Metvut Refunt (Painings) Rames Hillon, pool lavel. Dally 10an-2pm & 5pm-8pm. Until 12 Jan. Mahmond Mantsi (Drawings) Ratteb Seddig Hall, Cairo Atelier. 2 Karim Al-Dawla St, Downtown. Tel 574 6730. Daily exc Fri, 10an-1pm & 5pm-9pm. Until 12 Jan.

Cairo-Berlin Gellery, 17 Toussef Al-Guindi St, Bab Al-Loug, Tel 393 1764. Daily en: Sun, 12pm-8pm. Until 14 Jan.

Exhibition of works by New York-based photographer entitled Egypt, Land Under The Black Sun.

EXHIBITIONS

temporary artist.

Adel El-Siwi (Paintings

Austrabine Gallery, 8 Champollion St. Downtown Tel 778 623. Daily exc Fri. 11am-8pm. Until 11 Iam.
Recent works by a leading con-

Omar Hilai (Photographs) Lobby of the Jameel Center, AUC, Al-Sheikh Rihan St. Tel 354 2968. Daily 9am-9pm. Until 15 Jan. Haman Ali Ahmed (Paintings)
Espace Gallery, 1 Al-Sherijein St.
Downsown, Tel 393 1699. Daily esc.
Fri, 10am-2pm & Spm-Spm, Until 18
Ion.

Abdel-Movelm Mo'awad (Painings) Salama Gallery, 36/A Ahmed Orabi St. Mohandessin. Tel 346 3242. Daily cac Fri. 10m-2.30pm & 5.30pm-9pm. Until 18 Jan.

Mohamed Mohih (Wanercolous)
Catro Aseller, 2 Karim Al-David St,
Downtown, Tel 574 6730. Daily exc Fri, 10am-1pm & 5pm-9pm, Until 19

Happy Sundxy (Photographs) French Cultural Centre, 27 Sabri Abn Alam St, Heliopolis. Tel 417 4824. Daily ew San, 10am-2pm & Spin-8pm, 16-25 Jan.

To the Oriental Sources of La Fon-French Cultural Centre, Mounira anness, Madraset Al-Hogong Al-Ferensina St. Mountra. Tel 353 3725. Daily exc Sun, 10an-20m & 3pm-80m, Until 30 Jan. Discovering the Oriental inspirations of fabulist Jean de La Fontaine.

Pictro Melecchi
Italian Cultural Centre, 3 AlSheth Al-Morsoft St, Zamalet,
7d 340 8791, Daily exc Sun,
10an-2pm & 5pm-8pm, Until
31 Jan,
Patronos and photographs me-Paintings and photographs un-der the title A Life For Art.

Art in School Italian Cultural Centre, os above. Until 31 Jan. Children's drawings and paint-

Alberto Burri Alberto Barri
Zamolek Centre of Arts, I AlMachad Al-Swissri St. Zamalek. Tel 340 8211, Daily ecc.
Fri 10am-2pm & Spm-0pm, Until 25 Feb.
Sixty works by the artist exemplify his artistic innerary
through graphics.

Alfred Stleefitz (Photographs) Sony Gallery, AUC, Al-Sheikh Rihan St. Tel 357 5422, Daily ecc Fri & Sat. 9am ere Pri & Sat, 90m-120m or 6pm-9pm, Until 29 Feb. An exhibition of work by Al-fred Stieglitz, celebrated Amer-ican photographer. Stieglitz pi-oneered the use of cameras in Mohamed Mohib

the snow and rain; the first to photo-graph skyscrapers, clouds and mir-planes and was one of the pioneers of The Museum of Mr and Mrs Me-hamed Mahmood Khadil I Kafour Al-Akhshid St. Dokki. Tel 336 2376. Dally en: Mon. 10am-6pm. Egypt's largest collection of nine-ternin century European art, amassed by the late Mahmood Khadil, including works by Courbet. Van Goah. Gau-

works by Courbet, Van Gogh, Gan-guin, Manet and Rodin. Egyptian Moneum
Tahrir Sq. Downtown. Tel 575 4319.
Daily ecc Fri. Sun-4-30pm, Fri 9um11.30pm. 4.30pm.
An outstanding collection of Pharaonic and Prolemnic treasures and the

Coptic Museum
Mar Girgis, Old Catro. Tel 362 8766.
Deily exc Fri. 9am-4pm; Fri 9am-11am. 1pm-4pm.
Founded in 1910, the museum bouses the finest and largest collection of Coptic ext and americas in the world.

Islamic Museum
Port Said St. Ahmed Maher St. Bab
Al-Khalq. Tel 390 9930/390 1520.
Daily exc Fri. 9am-tpm; Fri 9am11.30am. 1.30pm-tpm.
A vast collection of Islamic arts and
crafts including mashrabiya, histreware ceramics, textiles, woodwork
and coins, drawn from Egypt's Fatrinid, Ayyubid and Mamhuke periods
and other countries in the Islamic
world.

Museum of Modern Egyptian Art Opera House Grounds, Geziru. Tel 340 6861. Daily ext Mon, 10am-1pm

Monamea Ragui Château Pyramio Guindi St, Otza.

Emra's Hazzat 'Arsh Mist (The Woman Who Shook Egypt's Throse) Lida, 23 Emadeiddin St. Downtown. Tel 934 284. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9mm ohumed Nagui Museum hiteau Pyramids, 9 Mai A museum devoted to the paintings of Two Harps and Orchestra

Mohamed Nagui (1888-1956).

Samo Do, Samo Don't Japanese Cultural Centre, 106 Quer Al-Aini St. Garden City. Tel 355 3962. // Jan. 6pm. Directed by Massyuki Suo (1992).

La Cadata Deli Dei (The Fall of The Gods) Italian Cultural Centre, 3 Al-Sheikh Al-Marsafi St, Zamalek, Tel 340 8791. 14 Jan, 6pm. Directed by Luchino Visconti, 1969.

French Fluss
French Cultural Centre, 27 Sabri Aba
Alam St. Heliopolis. Tel 417 4824.
Le. Rouge Et. Le. Neir (Red. And.
Black) 15 Jan. 7pm.
Directed by Clande Astant-Lara, 1954.
L'Argent (Moury) 17 Jan. 7pm.
Directed by Robert Bresson, 1982.

Ciremes charge their programmes every Monday. The information pro-vided is valid through to Sunday after which it is wise to check with the cir-

Nime Manthus Cairo Sheraton, Galaa Si, Giza. Tel 360 6081. Daily 10.50am, 1pm, 3pm, Gon. & 9pm, midatyki. Al-Salam, 65 Abdel-Hansid Badesvi St. Heliopolis. Tel 293 1072. Daily 3.30pm, 6.30pm &

Drop Zone Karim I, 15 Emadeddin St. Downtown. Tel 924 830. Daily 10am, Ipm. Spm.

Karini II, as above, Metro, 35 Talaat Harb St. Downtown, Tel 395 3897. Daily I Oam, I pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.

Monkey Trouble Al-Haram, Al-Haram St., Giza. Tel 3858358. Daily Illam, Ipm, 3pm, 6pm

Pree Willy II Normandy, 31 Al-Alarum St, He-liopolis, Tel 258 0254, Daily 12.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, & 9.30pm.

Pocahontas (Animated)
Takrir, 112 Takrir St. Dokki, Tel 333
4726, Dally 3pm, 6pm & 9pm, MGM,
Kolleyet Al-Nasr Sq. Masali Tel 352
3066, Dally 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm,
Ramsis Hilton L. Corniche Al-Nil St.
Tel 574 7436, Dally 10.30am, 1.30pm,
3.30pm, 6.30pm, & 9.30pm.

Prison
Radio, 24 Talaat Harb St. Downtown.
Tel 575 6562. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm,
6pm & 9pm. Rholi II. 26th July St,
Downtown. Tel 575 5053. Daily 1pm.

Jaws (3-D) Rivoli I, as above.

Cosmos II, 12 Emadeddin St, Downstown, Tel 779 537. Daily 10um, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.

neweneact Ramsis Hilton II., as above. Daily I pm., 3.30pm, 6.30pm & midnight. Tiba I., Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Daily 10.30am, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm,

i Married An Axo-Murderer Odeon, 4 Dr Abdel-Hamid Said St.

Downsown. Tel 575 8797. Dati 10.30am, 2.30pm, 5.30pm & 8.30pm.

Al-Garage (The Gausse) Miami, 38 Talaat Harb St. Donmiown. Tel 574 5656, Daily noon, 3.30pm, 5.30pm & 8.30pm.

Toyour Al-Zatum (Birds of the Dark) Diana, 17 Al-Alfi St. Emadericin. Tel 924 727. Daily 16am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm

& FM Spm.
Starring Adel Imam in a play scripted by Farous, Sabri. Al-Gandia wal Webshin (The Benetiful and the Ugby)-Al-Zamalek. 13 Shagaret Al-Dar St., Zamalek. Tel 341 0660. Dat-

Meme America Quar Al-Nil, Quar Al-Nil St. Tale-rir., Tel. 575 0761. Daily exo Tues, 10pm, Mon Spm. With Mohamed Sobhi, director

Balloon, Corniche AF Nil, Agons 20, Tel 347 1718, Daily esc Tues. 9pm. Musical starring Fryza Kamal Mobiumed El-Helw and Mo-

burned Nouts Ya Nas Elleamou (Try to Under-12 Nam a manuful (Try to Under-mind, People)
Floating Theatry, Fahmi Rushdi St. Tel 363 8783, Daily 9, 30pm. Starring Famid Rushad, Dim Ab-dellah and Hassan Kami.

Ra's Al-Dionk (Cockerel Dance) Marai, Talaat Harb St. Tel 761 086. Daily en: Tues, 10pm. Starring Nagah El-Mougi with Mo-hamed Abul-Hannan and Aida Rind.

Buhleel fi Istambel (Babloul in in-tanbul) Hilson Rannis, Cornicke Al-Nil. Tel.

Samir Glanem stars with Etham Sha-hine in yet another comedy.

La...Daissh Keda (None of Thar)
Al-Ribani, Emodeddin. Tel 591 3697.
Daily see Wed 10pm. Tues 8.30pm.
Staying Pounti, Manudoub Abdel-Alim
and Hanan El-Turk.

Hazzemail Ya... (Tie Me Up...)
Al-Gezira, Abdel-Aziz Al-Seoud, Mani-al. Tel 364 4160. Daily 10pm. Fri 8pm.
A musical involving extensive belly-dancing by Fifi Abdou. Also stanning Medhat Saleh and Sherif Mosmir.

National Circus
Next to the Balloon Theatre, Al-Nil St.
Corniche Al-Nil, Al-Agonza, Tel 3470612. Daily ext Wed, 9pm.

LECTURES

The 14th-Century Egyptian Physicism Du Si-Akfani
Netherlands Institute for Archeology and Arabic Studies, i Dr Mahmond Ami S. Zamalek. Tel 340 0076. 11 Jan, 5.30pm.
Lecture by Jan Just Wittenn, Leiden University. Al-Hob Fl Zorouf Sa'hn (Love in Dire Sweits)
Cosmos I, 12 Emadedilla St. Downtown. Tel 779 537. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Roxy, Roxy Sq. Heliopolis. Tel 258 0344. Daily 10am, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Tiba II, Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Daily 10.30am, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.

All information correct at time of going to press. However, it remains wise to check with venues first, since paramates, dates and times are subject to change at very short notice.

Please telephone or send information to, Listings, Al-Akram Weekly, Galan St, Cairo. Tel 5786064, Fax 5786089/833.

Inly El-Kashel

Around the galleries



STILL on at the Centre for Arts, Zamialek, the 24th General Exhibition which includes works in different media from a broad spectrum of Egyptian artists. Worth looking out for are works by Hamed Sayed, figure study sculptures by Hassan Heshmat and paintings of fellahas by Vissella Farid.

Gallery space at Cairo Atelier is given over to Mohamed Nabih Osman's 27 paintings which lovingly register the vis-ual realities of commoners at work, while the room facing plays host to 23 paintings, technically accomplished, academic still 4 lifes and portraits by Said Kamel. At the gallery strached to the Faculty of

Fine Arts, Zamalek, are ceramic vessels by Amina Ebeid. These bespeak her research and interest in the history of this most ancient of art forms.

A witch minus the broom-

Yusri El-Guindi's Al-Sahera (The Witch) took a long time arriving at the National, growing in the process from a slim one-act play into a ponderous three-hour performance. It was six months in rehearsal, with occasional mishaps and forced breakoffs; ominously, one week before the scheduled opening, its director Mohsen Helmi had a bad fall and hed to limp through the final days with the help of a crutch. The dress rehearsal was a cheerless, disheartening experience, and weeks later, the play has not improved.

had looked forward to Samiha Ayyouh's invigorating theatrical presence and ex-pected from El-Guindi the kind of passionate writing and fresh insight that inform his best work. Besides, the presence of Mohsen Helmi — a director famous for his colourful, vigorous style - as head of the production team, augured well. It was his debut at the National and one did not doubt that he would seize the opportunity to shake this old respectable establishment and shame it out of its habitual smug stolidity. The boisterous fairground atmosphere of his chef-d'oeuvre, El-Muhabazaiivyah (Street Performers), was too much to hope for; hut something of its zestful earthiness, galloping rhythm and imaginative visual

liveliness was definitely ex- work with. The original short also, since the audience are nej- leashes his tongue (not that he

cacophonous clash of styles. Egypt), is illuminating in this While El-Guindi's dramatically undernourished and verbally holy Galila - ahusively nickgrandiloqueot text chased after named "the witch" by corrupt grandiose effects, Helmi authorides though venerated by seemed desperately determined to undercut its bombastic declamations and prick its thetorical bubbles. Ironically, the play's spuriously complex douhle-plot schema, with two different spatio-temporal levels flict of artistic directions. The watching two unrelated plays art and meamerising presence could heal the fissure or seal the

cracks. And this is saying a lot. In any part, Ayyoub is always a pleasure to watch; her over- gible, vociferous Doppelganger powering personality and stirring voice rarely fail to rouse interminably preaching good the audience whatever the play. witch. As commentator-cum-I have seen her breathe life inlo narrator, she keeps intruding on some of the dullest imaginable the few events of the flimsy stolines and endow some dismally shallow texts with imaginary depths. The Witch, however, beat her. She put up a valiant fight, but she did not even have enough, her presence becomes of an eviction order at the talent was wasted in that the bare rudiments of a part to not only positively boring, but hands of a small bureaucrat un-

version of the play, entitled The ther deaf, blind nor dim, deeply had been silent before) and we What happened, in fact, was a Rape of Galila (read the rape of offensive. Still, rather than are treated to a full account of respect. In it, the eponymous authorioes though venerated hy the poor and downtrodden remains tantalisingly absent throughout. Only in the final

scene does she appear — ao ethereal figure in a hridal gown to carry the soul of her slain hero and defender up to heaven. and sets of characters, helped to Obviously, this short, unexacerbate this sense of a comprehentious political parable, with its typical popular hero, performance creaked along la-boriously, mercilessly jolting the audience from scene to vague, historical setting, was lightened progressive in-neither fit for the National nor tellectual, has unwittingly come scene and from one level to the for a formidable star like Ayyother until one felt one was oub. It had to be re-tailored to new measurements and when — and flat, dull ones at that, the material, however stretched, Not even Ayyouh's bewitching proved insufficient, the author resorted to patching.

In the oew version Galila. though still safely out of sight. is provided with an all too tanin the figure of an all-seeing, ty, telling us what we have al- of his lawful inheritance hy the ready seen, padding it up with rhyming fusty alogans and bombastic orations. Soon tocratic ancestors. The arrival

weary the audience into submission, the witch's unrelenting punctuated with sentimental verbal avalanche alerts them to its underlying dangerous hig-otry. Like the typical fanatic, her political creed is equated with absolute moral right and any opposition to it with diabolical malevolence. Indeed, the confusion of poliocs and religioo in this play is deeply disturbing and so is the progress of its folk hero from rebellion and lawlessness to jihad, or holy war then martyrdom. One wonders if El-Guindi, an enunder the influence of the arguments of the political Islamists. The confusion was perceptible in the first version where twice the honourable bandit kneels as if facing a holy shrine. In the second it becomes quite pronounced, thanks to the loquacious witch.

To pad The Rape of Galilo still further and make it look structurally elaborate, El-Guindi tocked a parallel plot, set in modern times, about a destitute citizen who is robbed government and reduced to dwelling in the tomb of his aris-

songs. At the end of it, the poor bureaucrat suddenly drops dead, and we are told that the 'truth' killed him. More likely, it was boredom that did it. The two stories, which are given mostly through narration, are arranged in alternating scenes to create a

false impression of complexity and variety. But neither the alternation nor the plethora of witty songs and claborate dances (roped in by the director) could do anything to alleviate the boredom or dispel the vexing feeling that one was being cheated.
It nearly broke my heart to

listen to the great Ayyoub ranting redundant banalities, to watch a consummate comedian like Osama Abbas limply repeating the same story over and over again and in the same ungainly, spiritless language, to see some of the best actors of the National reduced to extras or to rigid mechanical puppets, and worst of all to note El-Guindi's unflinching, laborious striving after symbolism at every stop. What a lot of good, expensive

ه كذاب الإمل

crities that have been such a feature of the

making a lot of films if 90 per cent of them

Despite the so-called crisis of the Egyptian film industry, brewing — if you believe everything you read — for several

years now, this new generation of filmmak-

ers managed to put out several very good

films. But then for them the issue was less

the possibility of making any old film, but a matter of making the films they wanted to make. Nor can the new crop of debut directors be accused of being novices. They have, after all, been involved in the film business for years, as scriptwriters, assistant directors and in a whole was a second to the film business for years, as scriptwriters, assistant directors.

ant directors, and in a whole host of other

For them it has been a long haul, though

the effort and the delays seem to have paid off. Last year three debut films were pre-

miered in competitions at the 19th Cairo

According to film critic Kamal Ramzy

there is nothing new in recent, vociferous

claims about the death of Egyptian einema.

It has, he says, a history that comprises

nothing other than overcoming crises, be they generated by fund raising, low profits,

taxes or a seemingly inescapable reliance

"Of course," says Ramzy, "there is also the problem of often modest creativity. But

even bad films often have 'something', and

it is this something that provides the spark for new initiatives."

It is thus that Ramzy accounts for the

emergence of the distinctive styles that

have characterised succeeding generations

of Egyptizm filmmakers since the 1950s.

But the real crunch came, Ramzi believes, in the late 60s and 70s. Just as Egypt was

coming to terms with the defeat of 67, so

the open door policy began and infliah was

born. The entire framework within which

older directors had warked suddenly came

to seem a dinosaur. According to Ramzy a new generation "of directors like Ra'fat El-Mihi, Mo-

hamed Khan, Atef El-Tayeb, Khairi Bishara, Ali Abdel-.

Khaleq and Ghaleb Shaath burst on the scene with vi-

tality and energy. Similarly, in the last few years, newer talents have emerged. Radwan El-Kashef surprised us

ship." Significantly El-Kashef did not rely on a literary

work as his source but co-wrote the script with Sami

"There were," El-Kashef says, "problems encountered during the pre-production stages. Some of the cast objected to the ending of the film — where the main char-

acter was meant to die. I was then obliged to alter the

script in a way that would satisfy the actors without

compromising my original ideas."

El-Kasher's Violets are Blue was joined by Said

Hamed'a Al-Hubb Fil-Tallaga (Love In The Re-frigerator) in competition at the Cairo Film Festival in

1992. An auspicious start, but since then neither di-

rector has gone on to follow up his debut with a second

feature. Part of the problem, Hamed believes, may be

that the new generation of first-time directors are intent

on stamping their films with an identity that is often id-

iosyncratic, and at odds with the expectations of pro-

"We are proud," Hamed insists, "not to merely re-

Books

with Leih Ya Banafseg (Violets Are Blue), a hig film, a rich in emotions, which celebrated the ideal of friend-

positions.

Film Festival.

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industry. What, after all, is the point of

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timistic note, insist it is no more than a phase. But labels aside the hard fact rethe crisis? mains — from an average of 70 films a year the number of productions has, in the El-Kashef and past two years, dropped to a low of 20 films. Hani Mustafa On the bright side, though, it may well be that filmmakers and critics have more to speak to the look forward to than to worry about in 1996. As overall costs have soured, sloppy directors on low-burget productions have become an impossibility, which means that 1995 audiwhom many ences were spared the cinematic medio-

hopes are

pinned





Ossama Fawzy's Afarit Al-Asfalt (top) and Magdi Ahmed Ali's Ya Donia Ya Gharumi

produce the kind of films that have had success in the past. Our aim is oot to replicate audience favourites, nor to confirm the prejudices of either audience or producers. We want to present something that challenges.

My new film is a product of the same scriptwriter/ director combination that resulted in Love in the Refrigerator, and I hope it will be as innovative as my first, though in different ways."

Kamal Ramzy detects parallels between Hamed's ex-reme boldness in form and use of cinematic vocabulary and Ossama Fawzi's treatment of content and subject matter in his striking debut Afarit Al-Asfalt (Asphalt Demons). And if an emergent sensibility can be said to link the new generation of directors, Ramzy would include among their oumber Magdi Ahmed Ali, whose Ya Donia Ya Gharami (My Life, My Passioo) be describes as "a film full of will and hope amidst funeral tunes." In some ways the career of Magdi Ahmed Ali is typ-

ical of his generation. For years he worked as an assistant director with, among others, Mohamed Khan and Khairi Bishara. But eventually he felt he had to put an end to executing other directors' ideas. "I had no opinion in the film and I became afraid of

losing my right to creativity. I had no intentions of continuing my career as an assistant, and so I quit."

But what awaits the assistant director who is tired by the first part of his job description? If Ali's experience

is anything to go by what awaits is a period of struggle. One needs immense perseverance to raise the finance that will allow an assistant director to direct his first film though the fact that Magdi Ahmed Ali was by no means an unknown quantity may have belped.

He had already written several scripts, one of which had been met with approval by those critics who bothered to read it. It was called Al-Balad (The Country), hut no one wanted to produce it, perhaps because it was about Egypt in the 1940s. Ya Donia Ya Gharami, on the other hand, had a resolutely contemporary setting. It was scripted by Helmi Helal, who first got the idea as he was walking out of a department store.

"Helmi and myself were talking about the girls who work there and suddenly it hit us that we had found the right script." And that is how Ali dropped the assistant. And the film "opened a door that is now difficult to

Good ideas and raw talent, though, are never quite "In the film business, like everywhere else, you have to have someone act as the backbone, someone to belp

you into the scene," explains Ali.
Radwan El-Kashef discovered other difficulties. He complains about the lack of efficient production managers. There were production problems caused not so much by a lack of capital but by the inefficiency of the

production manager. Fortunately, though, I was able to avoid many of the pitfalls first-time directors go through since I had

found a financier," says El-Kashef, Said Hamed would agree. According to him, new directors face difficulties because of the market, producers and stars. But thanks to the fact that Hussein El-Qala got involved in the production after I had started the shooting, I was protected from interference."

Today's young directors are unanimous in their condemnation of inteference by leading actors in the script, though they adopt different tactics in resisting the pressure to change anything and everything, including endings. Radwan El-Kashef elaims his lengthy experience as assistant director helped him overcome the difficulties that are usually imposed by working with stars, while scriptwriter Mustafa Zekri, who wrote Ossama Fawzy's Afarit Al-Asfalt, adopted a more direct approach.

"The only change in the script took place when Fawzy asked me to add a sequence. Whenever actors asked for alterations they received the same response. We refused to discuss them on the basis that it is none of their concern, an attitude that caused us to spend a lot of

time searching for the right cast."
As far as Magdi Ahmed Ali is concerned stars will simply have to change their attitudes. "Already, their fees are oo longer the same, and the conflict between directors and stars is slowly but surely being resolved without even necessitating a war." Nothing could be more different from the picture when Ali graduated from the Cinema Institute. "Then there was no real work opportunity for the new generation of aspiring directors. Cinema was impossible, inconceivable without stars. But things are very different now. As a matter of fact, my next film stars Ahmed Zaki, and my first involved three female stars."

Ali's next film promises to focus on the same socio-economie groups that took centre stage in Ya Donia Ya Gharami. "I can't imagine making a film about a doctor or an engineer. When I think film, these are the only people that come to my mind'

Said Hamed elaborates that in the light of the circumstances that the country is going through, making of the poor the great majority of society, it is only normal that new directors should focus so intensely on this majority.
"The well-to-do," Magdi Ahmed Ali

elaborates, "nowadays inhabit a different world. They don't belong to reality any

more. But less privileged people, jobless, homeless, hopeless people, are the ones we see every day. And they are the biggest audience for our films. Earlier directors have ridiculed them, others have idolised them, we just want to relate to them as human beings."

Film director and critic Mohamed Shebl insists that films which have been produced over the last two years have dealt with 'very volatile and aggressive subjects. It is not the usual commercial dribble that we have been warching," he says. According to Shebl, most people elaim that new directors are flocking to television and satellite stations to an attempt to escape the cinema crisis; "but this is not necessarily true. Real, radical directors who do have something to say usually can't say it on television. They are persistent.

Not only that, elaims Shebl. He feels that new directors want to reach audiences abroad and make it on the international film scene. "Since they are aiming at the international market, which is a giant leap for Egyptian cinema, they are forced to enhance the quality of their work. Not only in content, but also in sound, picture and editing standards." And should they succeed the spin-offs will, Shebl insists, be enormous. More and

better films. To conclude, Kamal Ramzy's advice is simple; "The first film is like a first baby — it is painful hut the pain sinks in retrospect. And if the film succeeds, the second may be more difficult but less painful."

Plain Talk

What do we mean when we say that we want to bring culture to the people? What culture and what people? In an age of strict stratification, it seems odd that we are still fond of making generalisations and of using vague words like "society" and the "masses".

The slogan "art for the people" has echoed across revolutions. Though at some level it expresses a noble sentiment, it nevertheless sounds condescending and patronising, the implication being that the government is doing the people a favour. Born at a time when a collector of masterpieces would be regarded as an enemy of the people, the slogan gave voice to the feel-ing that the old culture was clitist and should be done

away with. The idea of "art for the people" began to be implemented when, for the first time, the old opera house opened its doors to workers. It was quite a sight: simple, robust people loitering in the corridors where in olden times only aristocrats had gently trod.

When it opened its doors to the general public, the opera house changed its role. It had to give the members of the new public what they wanted. The change was not so much to give the plebeians high cul-ture in the form of ballet and opera, but rather, it was, like the storming of the Bastille, an assertion of the people's anthority. The spirit in which the change occurred bespoke a sentiment different from the motto of the Irish twilight ("give the people what is high until it becomes popular"). What it seemed to say was: "Let the people see what the country's previous masters enjoyed." But eventually it became simply a question of giving the people what they wanted and what they could understand against a backdrop of pomp and circumstance. This is why the opera house began to present Egyptian op-

Nationalism and chauvinism nave no place in an opera house. Opera houses, by nature, are places where the best of high culture is presented. Italian opera, French and Russian ballets and so on are part of the repertoire of opera houses all over the world. Even Wagner's Ring Sequence continues to be a part of the repertoire.

The current Cairo Opera House complex has a programme that I heartily endorse, one which is not disthe Lincoln Centre in New York or the Kennedy Centre in Washington. Like them, the Cairo Opera House is a complex hosting diverse aetivities, ranging from film shows to lectures, seminars and art exhibitions. But the Cairo Opera House

has also revived its role as a centre for what is often tenned high culture. More importantly, it is not xenophobie and embraces what is good in other cultures. Art knows no boundaries. May it

Mursi Saad El-Din

sociable commentator

Muzakirati Fi Nisf Qam (My Memoirs of Half a Century), Ahmed Shafik Pasha, vol I, Cairo: General Egyptian Book Organisation, 1994

On 18 May 1860 a child was born in Sayeda Zeinab who was to play an important role within the absolute monarchy that ruled Egypt. He was party to innumerable decisions taken, conspiracies hatched, intrigues enacted.

Ahmed Shafik enjoyed the patronage of the khedive. He was, too, to render a great service to finure historians, largely through his compilation of Egypt's Political Annals, a massive undertaking that resulted in ten volumes containing some 10,500 pages and 15,000 illustrations. This invaluable work includes the texts of speeches, press com-mentary and other minutiae of political life from the age of Mohamed Ali to the administration of Sidki Pasha in the 1930s.

Ahmed Shafik's memoirs, on the other hand, cover the period between 1860 and 1923. And from this mass of material the General Egyptian Book Organisation has chosen to reprint two volumes, the first covering the period from 1873 to the death of Khedive Tewfik in January 1892, the second the years from 1892 to 1902. Two further volumes remain in the pipeline. The tone of the memoirs is intimate and

revelatory as Shafik discusses many subjects that at the time would have been considered taboo, or at the very least inappropriate. The attention to detail betrays Shafik's role as a functionary, albeit one who had access to a vast number of public

figures, portuaits of which spice his text. Shafik's father had held public office under the khedives Said and Ismail as well as in the early part of the rule of the Khedive Tewfik. His career culminated with his appointment as general inspector of finance for the Governorate of Daqahlia, at the time a powerful position. Shafik's mother was of Circassian origin, a slave freed by Ali El-Bakri. Shafik was lucky enough to be among the 20 children of functionaries whose education Tewfik, then heir to the throne, undertook to finance. The royal patron, according to Shafik, was very attentive to his wards, inviting them on Fridays to promenades and hunch at the Al-Qubba Palace and pausing occasionally to exchange pleasantries with them, occasionally handing out freshly minted silver

Shafik received his schooling first at Al-Muhtadayan and then at Al-Qubba school, the latter having been founded by his royal patron. After graduating Shafik worked as a demonstrator at Al-Qubba School, then as a clerk in the Foreign Languages Department where his monthly salary was 600 piastres. He eventually moved to another elerical position in the Office of Public

Records, housed in the Citadel. By the time Tewfik ascended the throne Shafik had become an attorney within the khedival department, from which position he had witnessed the tail end of the rule of Ismail. He discusses the

final, fateful years of Ismail's reign, chronicling in detail the extravagance and Europeanising impulse of the khedive. The enormous expenses incurred by Ismail in bribing the Sublime Porte as he attempted to buy autonomy are well-documented, as is Ismail's lavish building programme and wasteful extravagance. According to Shafik, the final cost of the reception accorded official guests at the inanguration of the Suez Canal reached the stagfigure LE1,400,000.

Shafik Fortmately does not restrict himself

sions. There is little that sidered beneath recording. Hence the significance of these memous, whose author saw fit to discourse on all aspects of society. Newspapers are quoted, the education system examined, people's clothes described. From these memoirs we learn what punishments were exacted in schools for precisely which misdemeanour. We learn what schoolgirls are for hunch at the girls' school in Scionfia, the first of its kind, founded by Khedive Ismail's third wife. Through his portrayal of family life we are that more than smack of bourgeois dis-

which Egyptian families kept slaves, by the segregation between young men and women, the decorous attire of respectable women indoors and out, hy details of outings to clubs and parks in Shubra and Giza, trips to the theatre and descriptions of popular actors and singers, the eustoms and rituals associated with weddings and circumcision.

In his capacity as a court employee Sha-fik attended royal weddings and gives vivid sketches of the celebrations that marked the betrothal of Ismail's sons. The trousseaus of royal brides are itemised and the menus

approval he recalls his sighting of a man who calls himself Ali Kaka", dressed in a white galabiva belted with a rope from which is suspended "what resembles an enlarged sexual organ". Ali Kaka, it seems, carried a whip in his hand as he engaged in flirtatious repartee with the boy who accompanied him, drawing crowds of men and women.

In documenting the inner workings of Is-mail's palaces Shafik enlisted the help of his mother-in-law, the wife of Raqib Pasha, a close confidente of the princesses. Ismail had four wives, each residing with her ret-



British soldiers search passersby in Alexandria from Muzakirati Fi Nisf Qurn; Colonel Orabi on campaign to the grand state occa- from L'Hlustration, 16 September 1882

side the vast array of entertainments to which guests were treated.

Moulids receive their fair share of commentary, particularly that of the Prophet, as Shafik describes the congregation of Sufi sects, their processions and ceremonies, with the sheikh of Al-Sa'dia sect on horse back riding over the torses of dozens of followers lying oo their backs. Glass is consumed in great quantity at such events, and any number of snakes charmed. In tones

escapes his scrutiny, nothing that he con- served at wedding parties discussed along- inue of servants and slaves in an establishment of her own. In addition the khedive kept a separate establishment inhabited by his misuresses and slave-girls. Often, in the course of a peripatetic life between palaces. all five establishments would be housed in

separate wings of the same building. Tewfik ascended to the throne in 1873. following the decision of European states to depose Ismail, just as his father was embarking on a life of exile in Naples. A few months later Shafik was himself dispatched to Italy, the brief given him by the new

khedive to spy on Ismail because Tewfik suspected his father of plotting a return to

Throughout his career Shafik was never to have a patron like Tewfik, the khedive whom he served throughout his reign and at whose bedside he was to be found in 1892, as his patron lay dying. A history of loyal service, and one that provided the author of these memoirs a vantage point from which to survey one of the seminal episodes of modern Egyptian history - the Urabi uprising and its defeat, followed by the occupation of the British.

Urabi's defeat, while it may well have saved Khedive Tewfik, also marked his final submission to the British. Yet despite his allegiance to the khedive, Shafik's account of the turbulent events surrounding the revolution and its aftermath is at once detached, meticulous and lucid.

Though Shafik's testimony on the Urabi Revolution differs little from the narratives of most other historians, his position lends the account an immediacy that others lack, particularly when it comes to scenes of the khedive hiding in Ras Al-Tin Palace, waiting for the British forces to occupy the country and rescue his throne. And of course, on 17 July 1882 Admiral Seymour did enter Alexandria, announcing that the kbedive had entrusted him with enforcing law and order. Yet it was over two months later that Khedive Tewfik finally left Ras Al-Tin, accompanied by

the British consul-general, his carriage escorted by mounted British soldiers. So it was he travelled to the railway station and boarded the train that took him to Cairo, where he was met by a similar procession to escort him to the Gezira Palace. (Abdin Palace, ironically, was at that point still occupied by General Wolseley, commander of the British troops.) In a rather touching footnote, Shafik records the gratitude of the khedive to those courtiers who had remained at his side during the crisis. His salary was raised from LE12 to LE20 a

Safely ensconced on his throne, Khedive Tewfik threw a series of lavish banquets for his "liberators". These are recorded in customary detail, including one particularly spectacular evening at the Gezira Palace at which even Shafik, a man who had seen much and heard even more, felt obliged to wax lyrical about the magnificence of the foods and entertainments.

Dutifully Shafik goes on to chroniele the final years of Tewfik's reign. He acmies the khedive to the Delta at the height of the cholera epidemic of 1883, records the formation of local courts and the appointment of a British undersecretary at the Ministry of Interior. He plots the growth in commercial activity and the introduction of various new fangled inventions, including the telephone. He expresses his vexation at the British annexation of Sudan.

In 1885, Shafik travelled to Paris to study political science. His account of his stay in France provides an interesting counterpoint to Rifaa Rafie Al-Tahtawi's documentation of his own, earlier sojourn. While Tahtawi devoted much time and effort to recording the constitution and law of France and enumerating the political rights enjoyed by its citizenry and the signs of advancement in the country, Shafik Pasha strikes a more personal note, recording impressions of Parisian parks, theatres and cabarets, the amazing variety of French wine and parties attended

Shafik seems to have been the most sociable of men, and very little escapes his eye The present volume concludes with Shafik's return to Egypt, and finds him lamenting many of the changes that had occurred, a lament that culminates with the death of the khedive and a detailed de-

scription of the funeral. An eyewitness account then, but one from a very privileged position, full of insider intrigue and the kind of concrete details that bring a period to life. In short Shafik's memoirs are an important constituent of the hiography of monarchist Egypt.

> Reviewed by Mahmoud El-Wardani

Engineering chang High-ranking government officials, scholars and professionals

gathered to discuss major issues from housing to earthquakes, marketing to urban planning. Nermeen El-Nawawi attended

The fourth Al-Azhar Engineering International Conference (AEIC) came to a close last week. Participants agreed on the need to link market and national needs to research topics, especially in environment, urban planning, earthquakeresistant design, and planning to avoid damage caused by flooding. To achieve progress, cooperation and scientific agreements with international universities and research centres must be increased, participants advised. The confer-ence also recommended establishing ties between universities and production centres in industry, government, private enterprises and

The bi-annual conference, which lasted for five days, was held under the auspices of Sheikh Gad El-Haq Ali Gad El-Haq, Sheikh of Al-Azhar; the honorary chairmanship of Professor Ahmed Omar Hashem, president of Al-Azhar University; and the chairmanship of Professor Mohamed El-Nawawi, dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Al-Azhar University. Guests at the inauguration ceremony were Engineer Salah Hasaballah, Minister of Housing and Utilities; Dr Ibrahim Fawzi, Minister of Industry and Mineral Wealth; and Dr Mohamed Ibrahim Soliman, Minister of Development and New Com-

"This hi-annual event has established a very sound reputation among universities, research centres, industrial establishments and military and governmental institutions," said Hashem.

The conference is perhaps the first to encompass all engineering specialisations: mechanical, civil, electrical, architectural, regional and city planning, systems and computers, mining and pe-troleum engineering," El-Nawawi said. Its di-versity explains the high turnout of researchers, scientists and professors of engineering, he added.

Representatives of 35 Arab, Islamic and foreign countries participated in the conference. "Eighty-eight scientific sessions and guest lectures were scheduled and attended by more than 1,000 participants in the cooference," said professor Hussein Ahbas, vice-chairman of the conference. "The 500 papers presented and dis-cussed throughout the conference were published in 11 volumes, arranged in accordance with the relevant specialisations," be added.

Professor Tarek Khalil, dean of the Graduate School of Miami University, gave a lecture on technology management. As the president of the International Association for the Management of Technology, he explained the enormous change in technology and its effect on the development

and wealth of individuals, enterprises and oa-tions. "I tried to shed light on the necessary preparations required to cope with such effects, he said. "Manpower, innovations, economic development are the key words for a bigger share in the market and an upper hand in competitiveoess," Khalil added

Professor Ahmed Gboubarrah, chairman of the Civil and Mechanical Engineering Department, McMaster University, Canada, presented the latest scientific findings, whether theoretical or practical, in adapting structural design to withstand dynamic loads as earthquake shocks. Treatment of such shocks includes oew approaches in design and in the selection of struc-ture materials used in building," he said. Professor Mohamed Omar Ezzat, head of the

quality assurance division in a leading US corporacon, one of the largest shareholders in the automotive component supplies industry, presented a lecture on quality assurance and en-terprise accreditation for acquisition of systems like the ISO-9000 series (1,2,3 and 4). "For companies to become global in trading with other nations, they must have a quality system recognised by the international community and have the confidence of the customer by de-livering quality products on time," Ezzat said.

Professor Abdel-Halim Omar of Carlton University, Canada, gave a series of presentations on road design and maintenance issues. "We mainly emphasised the importance of such issues and their relations to the advancement and progress of the economies of different nations,"

Special attention was also given to the problems of young people and recent graduates, especially the unemployment crisis. A seminar for specialists from the Social Development Fund introduced the importance of the role of scientific research in the development of small businesses and projects. Conditions required for the success of small businesses such as finance, equipment, material, manpower and marketing

were discussed The conference also covered other topics of social, economic and political importance, such as the environment, energy, communication and transport, architecture and regional planning, production and automation, systems and computers and many others.

Recommendations covered a wide spectrum of fields, with special attention given to developing undergraduate and graduate educational pro-



Earthquake damage and ways to miolmise it were important items on the agenda

photo; Yves Paris

Damage-free disposal nationally will come into operation. Mahmoud Bake reports

This year, the first hospital incinerator conceived and constructed

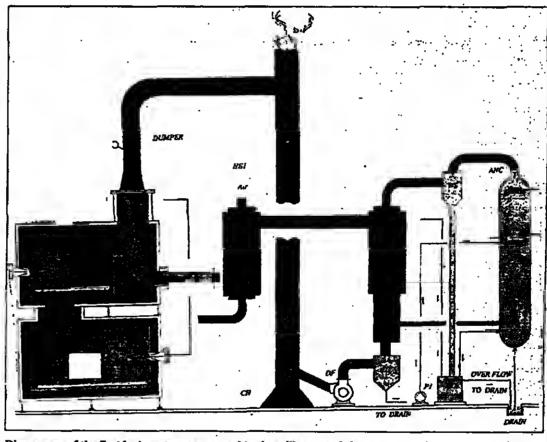


Diagramme of the first incinerator constructed to the military workshops

The garbage collected from tians is intended to solve this problem once it is installed in hospitals every day represents

one of the greatest dangers to public health. It cootains a great amount of plastic in the form of packaging materials, plastic bottles and disposable plastic syringes, steel needles (many of which are liable to carry infectious germs), left-over blood from blood banks, soiled bandages and expired of the items liable to be found in the hospital's garbage disposal containers. Until recently these items were disposed of in the same way as and polluting the atmosphere, household garbage, with no in compliance with the 1994 thought as to the possible tox-Environment Law. icity or germ contents of the waste, says Dr Mohamed El-Zarqa, head of the Quality of Environment sector with the Egyptian Eovironmental Affairs Agency (EEAA) and ooe between of the masterminds of a pro-

chased with a view to recycling, either despite the dangers entailed or because of the collectors' ignorance of possible threats to their health, he The first incinerator entirely

ject aimed at disposing of hos-

pital waste scientifically. Part

of the waste was formerly pur-

conceived and built by Egyp-

Spinach tips & stems stew (II)

all hospitals. This alternative method of waste disposal, which has been in the planning stage for some time now, has involved experts from the Health, Scientific Research and Eovironment Ministries. The Ministry of Scientific Research, collaboration with the EEAA, has produced the first model for an incinerator will be attached to every hospital in Egypt in the future, burning refuse without the danger of noxious fumes escaping

The first model was constructed in a military factory and it is expected that its cost, once production reaches industrial proporcions, will vary LE12,000 and LE18,000 a unit.

A committee was formed including doctors from Qasr Al-Aini and Cairo University's Medical School Hospital, scientists from Ain Shams University, experts from the EEAA and the Ministry of Scientific Research as well as the engineers responsible for the construction of the model. The team's task was to analyse the

fumes resulting from the process, and to assess the performance of the incinerator under normal conditions. Over a period of four months, ordinary garbage was collected from Oasr Al-Aini hospital and processed through the incinerator daily. The data was compiled and the characteristics of each component burned was subted to a series of tests. The EEAA then coovened a

incinerated matter and the

three-day workshop from 19 to 21 December, in order to train all Egyptian hospital staff (including that of governorate hospitals) involved in the garbage collection operation in the correct methods of handling the different categories of hospital refuse and keeping a log book indicating the origin and nature of the items disposed of. in compliance with Article 4 of the 1994 Environment Law.

This law further requires that bospital garbage collectors and bandlers acquire an official certificate testifying to their competence before they are hired. It is the responsibility of the hospital's administration to ensure that the law is followed Periodie inspections will be undertaken and penalties applied.

Sufra Dayma

Restaurant review

Separate tables

Nigel Ryan discovers the perfect place to end it all

Ingredients: Tips and stems of last week's spinacb

chunks

1/2 kilo of veal

kilo of tomatoes (squeezed) l thsp. of tomato paste onion (finely chopped) tbsp. crushed garlie 150 grms. of dried hummos soaked and tenderly boiled Butter or oil

Method:

Wash well the tips and stems. Fry the onion and garlie until yellowish in colour, then fry in the meat for a few minutes. Pour over the tomato juice and paste. Leave until the sauce thickens and the meat is tender. Season, then put in the spinach tips and stems, lower the heat and leave to cook. Drain the hummos from its waters by means of a sieve. Make sure it is not over-cooked so that n takes its proper time to cook with the spinach. Half an hour before removing from heat, put the hummos to until the stew thickens. Serve with rice and green salad.

Moushira Abdel-Malek

Champollion is one of my favourite streets in downtown Cairo. And after sunset the southern end of the street, the end near Tahrir, undergoes something of a transformation. For several mesometiming of a diagnostic for several metres the pavement is littered with tables and chairs, with groups of people sitting, drinking, smoking shisha and sometimes eating. It is, incidentally, one of the few places left in town where you can happily sit on the pavement and

enjoy a beer. The tables are an extension of Shehan, a newisb establishment that seems, somehow, never to have quite taken off. It is a large establishment. occupying three floors. There is a takeaway section on the ground floor. On the first floor is a closed restaurant and on the third a "rooftop". It was to the latter I climbed.

The rooftop is indeed on the roof, though because it is winter the sides have been enclosed in the kind of multicoloured tenting fabric that is used for weddings, funerals and construction sites. You sit on benches. Perhaps the leftover New Year decorations — tatty tinsel and the remains of ballonns — made the atmosphere a lit-ile more desultory than it might otherwise be. The mood of the place is enervating. It seems the exclusive preserve of courting couples who, judging by the expressions on their faces, are on the verge of ending their relationships. Through this slightly gloomy space two waitresses trot efficiently enough, smiling and trying to spread a

little good cheer. Shehan deserves a lighter clientele. The people who sit on the pavement always seem cheery enough. They should be encouraged to come inside in an attempt to dispel the depression which, it would appear, is currently the preserve only of those who seek the inner sanctum.

The meou is a straightforward affair, broken into five sections. You can choose from Lunch Basket, Oriental Course, Chicken Sandwich Corner, Meat Corner and Other Sandwiches. I choose from the Oriental Course — vegetable tagen with beef, rice and salad. The person J was lunching with had Mexican chicken. Both came along with a separate order of french fries. Now, though the orders were taken promptly.

the food took some time to arrive, which is un-fortunate because it allows the spirit of the place time to descend. But eventually the food did arrive. The tagen came in an earthenware pot french beans, carrots, potatoes, onion and beef in a sauce that consisted mostly of tomato puree. If this sounds unappetising I apologise, because it was actually quite good. I suppose it is really just a form of oursery food, the kind of thing people remember from their childhoods. And though it is not the sort of meal you would want everyday, on a rooftop, protected from the January cold only by a stretch of tenong fabric, it served its purpose admirably.

The Mexican chicken comprised pieces of chicken breast fried with red and green peppers. It, too, had more than a hint of tomato puree. The french fries were made from real potatoes rather than those reconstituted frozen things.

The food at Shehan does not try hard. It is unamhitious and consequently does not disappoint. The hill, when it came, was another pleasant surprise. With two soft drinks it was less than LE30. If the customers would only smile as much as the waitresses, it might have charm. As it was I left feeling full, though not of the joys of spring.
Shehan, 8, Champollion. Downtown. Tel:

Al-Ahram Weekly Crossword

By Samla Abdennour

ACROSS Beseech enmestly (4) Nazi leader, sentenced to life imprisonment in 1946 (4) Cringe (5)

Queue; telephone cable (4) Spout; radiate (4) Like sheep (5) Platoon (4) Breezy (4) Alights: grounds (5) Selective Service System

Be mistaken (3) Guided (3) Superlative suffix (3) Follows closely (5) Brute; animal (5) Additional; different (5) Plural of hers (6) Time-worn: aged (3) Competitor (5)

Assault (5) Shield-shaped (7) Injurious; foul (7) Brotherhood (5)



Last week's solotion

Contemporary (5) Baste; stitch (3) 50. 52. 54. Pricks (6) Unwanted wild berbs (5) A division of the calyx (5) Duck with soft feathers used to stuff quilts (5)

60. Sleeveless outer garment wom by Arabs (3) Of unsound mind (3) Remote (3) First lady (3) Carried or transported (5) Agape (4) Holy picture (4) Dined (5) 69. 71. 72. 73. Keats or Shelley (4)

Solid substance left after heating petrol (4) 75. Appointment (5) 76. Comb. form for 77. Ogles (4) Comb. form for "far" (4) DOWN Sumptuous (5) Flush out (5)

3. Aromatic seeds used to flavour sweets and liqueurs (5) So far (3) When repeated, form of cheering speaker (4) Arab prince (4) To ... with love (3) Manner; fashion (5) Intentional unfriendly treat-JÛ. Eggs (3) 11. Fermented grape juice (4)

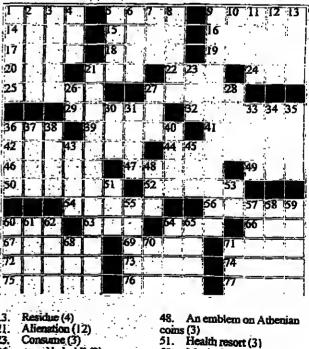
Goals (4)

Consume (3) ... and behold! (2) Lady's garment (3) Thwack (3) 30. Plane; level (4) 31. 33. dess of fertility (4) French dream (4) Simmer (4) position (4) Advanced (4) 38. Roman 552 (4) Wash out (4) 40.

Heavy weights (4)

Busy insect (3)

43.



53.

55.

own (5)

Alienation (12) Fifty are five of these (4) Ancient Egyptians' god-Musical or literary com-

Allurement (5) Summon; call up spirit from the dead (5) 59. M. Coty et al (5) 60. Encourage (4) Male guinea pig (4) Quaintly artistic (4) 61. 62. 64. Sense (4) 65. Poker stake (4) Weather directions (3) 68. ic and poet (3)

Musical note (2)

Appropriate; make one's

Pourri

No penny for my thoughts

Good and bad, right or wrong; such are the first values introduced in any educational process as soon as a child is able to stand up in his/her crib. More often than not, these concepts are enforced by means of religious instruction and/or threats of losing parental love. As a child, I had to contend with the added burden of possessing my own guardian angel, who wept bitterly when I erred on the side of independence, but smiled approvingly when I obeyed my elders. This particular angel had a tendency to become inordinately upset — or so I. was told — whenever I had it in my mind to follow my own inclinations. Moreover, he/she (it?) had the power to penetrate my innermost thoughts and reading my mind clearly, detect the seeds of naughtiness before they had even begun to sprout. To stop "bad thoughts" from entering my mind I practiced some voce nonsensical incantations, which seemed to work up to a point but un-doubtedly convinced many who knew me then that was slightly retarded.

My grandmother, who was on intimate terms with my angel, informed me of his/her moods on a daily basis and sometimes warned mc cryptically that he/she would abandon me the day I "lost my innocence". He/she would only be back one last time to help me across the Styx. I would be well advised to have a clear conscience then, because, acrossed to have a clear conscience men, occase, she said, the angel was good at keeping books. I never managed to elucidate what "my innocence" consisted of and slowly, I began to lose interest, letting the wind of rebellion dissipate the impenetrable mystery. With time I became more and more confident that I could settle my accounts favourably at the time of the crossing, which I was sure was a long way away. Soon I was experimenting with ideas, albeit secretly. I let some bad ones enter my mind, having heard no heartwrenching laments from the heavens I graduated to following up with practical applications, which, I was happy to note, brought pobody's wrath upon my head. But these days of bliss were counted. With the angel momentarily out of the way, a new obstacle was to hinder my initiatives. With ad-olescence, the bogey of "what will people say" began to loom over every one of my actions. Whereas by and large, the angel had been concerned with things abstract, "what will people say" invaded my entire world spanning the gamut from the expression of a physical need or a simple wish to the way Theld the fish knife. Considering that my guardian angel had not departed without leaving his mark, my teen years became a time of great constraints. Moulded by these taboos, I married a man who

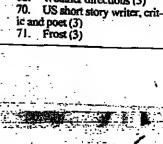
professed to be a liberal, where he was concerned that is. His nearest and dearest were actively encouraged to share his opinions. "You are absolutely right", became the Open Sesame to marital

In the '60s, initiative, competitiveness and amhition went out of fashion, to be replaced by a "love thy neighbour no matter what" kind of attitude. Although I found it sickening on the whole, I re-framed from expressing such a passe opinion. When my daughter was commended at school for allowing a "less privileged" child to copy her math test, I joined my congratidary voice to that of her teachers. That both children received a failing grade was an indication that she was bonding well with her classmates in the happy mediocrity that had every reason to rejoice. I also stopped describing some of my fellow men and women as cretins, morons, thieves and criminals. They were just "people" and as long as they "did their best" they were not to be held responsible for their bad behaviour. Society was. As nobody bothered to explain what their best entailed and as permissiveness seemed to be the order of the day, I was quite happy to chant in unison at the PTA meetings "he is OK, she is OK, we are all OK" and deride old-fashioned schools which in this day and age still insisted on homework and such archaic notions as discipline. I thus became a cool mother.

In this last decade I have been busy exploring the arcana of political correctness and learning the jargon. I am almost fluent now, but the rumour has it that the whole concept may soon be outdated. That doesn't bother me in the least; I have become an expert at adopting ready-made ideas: whatever comes next, I will rise to the occasion. The question, however, is when, before my angel makes his/her final come-back, will I be allowed to think my own thoughts?

Fayza Hassan

هكذامن الإعل



The promise of progress

The recent introduction of foreign-language sections in the Law and Commerce faculties of Egypt's national universities was in response to concerns about the ability of graduates to compete in an international arena that values language skills and insists upon a familiarity with foreign legal, business, and financial systems. New departments, sometimes with external support, were set up at Cairo, Alexandria and Ain Shams universities. Now that the first graduates have joined the job-market, Al-Ahram Weekly surveys the sections and asks, have the new departments fulfilled their promise?

Education for abroad

Will the new foreign-language divisions at Cairo University qualify Egyptian students to compete, asks Nirmeen Nizar

To the casual observer, mystery, even suspicion, might seem to dominate Cairo University's Faculties of Law and Commerce these days. Although students continue to enrol in the same school, recent changes in the language of instruction and curriculum have divided the student body between those studying primarily in foreign languages and those who continue to receive instruction in Arabie. Some students display remarkable ignorance of their colleagues' studies and activities. "We see students going up and down the stairs every day, but we know nothing about them," commented Rania Abaza, a student in the Faculty of Law's Arabic department.

In reality, however, there is little mystery. These new students are simply subscribing to the old adage, "necessity is the mother of invention"—the invention being, in this case, the use of English and French in the national universities, such as Cairo University. Strictly speaking, these new departments are not that 'new' either, for years an English-language department existed at Helwan University's Faculty of Commerce and International Trade, but it was only in 1991 that a similar division was opened at Cairo University. Motivating the decision to expand the use of foreign-language instruction was the rapidly changing international business elimate, and worries about the competitiveness and qualifications of Egyptian students. "The arbitration of international trade disputes is done in English," said Mahmoud El-Sharqawi, dean of Cairo University's Faculty of Law. "In addition, international law cases, by their very nature, require the ability to communicate effortlessly in English." With few English-speaking Egyptian lawyers to be found, Egyptians have been forced to turn to foreign law offices, and consequently have had to pay high legal fees. Increasing the number of Egyptian arbitrators, said El-Sharqawi, would save millions of dollars in un-

The primary aim of these programmes, however, is not just to save money, but to instruct Egyptian students better on how to negotiate, and how to wheel and deal, with their foreign counterparts in the business and legal worlds. Consequently, many courses, such as those concerning the Anglo-American legal systems, Economy and International Law, in the Law Faculty's curriculum are taught in English. To ensure that these students also acquire an education useful in Egypt, other courses, such as those in the Sharl'a and those concerning legal presentations, are taught in Arabie. The end result, it is hoped, will be a lawyer or professional who has one foot firmly planted in Egypt and one foot

On paper, then, the programmes sound good, and they address an obvious need. But proof of their attractiveness and ability to meet market demands must be found in the number of students opting for the new programmes, and not in their theoretical aims. While it is still a little early to tell how the new division at the Law Faculty is faring, since the English language division was started only this year, the Faculty of Commerce's programme seems to have been highly successful. When the programme was launched in 1991, 150 students curolled; the number has now risen dramatically to 900. The Arabie division has about 2,800 stu-

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The Faculty of Law, however, has another foreign-language programme that is also designed to meet the needs of interoational effectiveness. Five years ago, the school introduced a French department as part of a cultural exchange programme between Egypt and France. Students enrolled in it earned a Masters degree in Law awarded by the Sorbonne in Paris. Acceptance was based on the results of a written and oral exam in French, along

with overall scholastic aptitude.

Another programme was then launched where students could take a series of courses leading to the French licence (Bachelors) degree, also from the Sorbonne. Students in this programme attend lectures, given at Cairo University hy French professors, which cover the same material as is tackled by their counterparts in Paris. At the end of the year, a professor from the Sorbonne comes to Egypt to administer oral exams; the written exams are sent hy diplomatic pouch to France. School officials note that a major drawback to this programme is that, because of its French emphasis. It does not qualify graduates to practice law in Egypnian courts. To meet this objection, a further Franco-Egyptian agreement is being negotiated whereby students would also be able to attend courses at Cairo University's Faculty of Law, thus

giving them the necessary additional qualification.

This stage of the agreement has not yet been concluded, but students have not shied away from earning the French degree alone. During its three-year existence, the number of students in the programme has doubled — the major draw being, it seems, that this way an Egyptian student can earn a foreign degree without leaving home. Riham Abul-Ezz, a second-year student in the programme, adds that for her one of the advantages of this arrangement is that she receives more personal attention from the professors in Cairo than she would have had she enrolled at the

Sorbonne itself.

Lamia Helmy, another second-year student, said that the main drawback of the current arrangement was not an issue for her. "I'd like to work in law or politics, but I don't want to practice law before courts in Egypt. It doesn't really matter to me if my certificate is not accepted by the Egyptian courts," she said.

Aside from offering students the chance to get a foreign degree, Cairo University's foreign language divisions also afford students a less expensive alternative to studying at the American University in Cairo (AUC) or at universities overseas. "I took the versity in Cairo (AUC) said Wael Ghanem, a student in the necessary test to enter AUC," said Wael Ghanem, a student in the Faculty of Commerce's English language programme. "But in the year 1 applied, AUC's tuiton increased by 120 per cent, making

it inaccessible for new students like myself."

"When I enrolled in this programme, however, I realised that our courses and texts are very similar to those used at the AUC," he said. "We also received a lot of one-on-one attention, and for me, this was one of the main reasons for wanting to attend AUC."

The programmes set out to be cost-efficient alternatives to

The programmes set out to be cost-efficient attendances to AUC, with no sacrifice in terms of quality of education. The enrolment fee for the English programme in the Faculty of Commerce is LE1,000; students are also required to pay an annual tuitoo fee of LE1,000 and to hand over another LE750 per year for books. These costs exceed those stipulated hy a decree issued by books. These costs exceed those stipulated hy a decree issued by books. These costs exceed those stipulated hy a decree issued by books. These costs exceed those stipulated hy a decree issued by books. These connect and Mahmoud Bazaraa, dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Mahmoud El-Sharqawi, the Law Faculty of Commerce and Mahmoud El-Sharqawi, the Law Faculty is dean, said that the programmes would not be able to operate on such low fees. This is less than what is charged by some private colleges, schools and state-owned institutions like the Sacarames could not operate, he said.

grammes could not operate, he said.

For experts on higher education, this is a familiar story: education costs money, and budget crunches, tenure and departmental tion costs money, and budget crunches, tenure and departmental rankings are always sources of dispute between professors, advankings are always sources of these programmes, how-ministrators and students. The success of these programmes, how-ministrators to hinge not only on overcoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on overcoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on overcoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever, seems to hinge not only on avercoming these financial facever.

Proficiency for a better career

Gihan Shahine visits the French and English sections at Ain Shams University

Last October, 21 new graduates became the first to complete their studies at the French department of the Faculty of Commerce, Ain Shams University. The idea of devoting a section at the Faculty of Commerce exclusively to those whose language of study was French, with France as the main financier, had been suggested in 1992 by the French cultural counsellor to Favot.

Egypt.

The reason eited was, once again, worries about the international effectiveness of Egyptian degrees. Foreign language sections at the national universities aim to meet a growing need for new graduates who are better equipped to succeed in an increasingly competitive joh market, "France has a large oumber of business franchises in Egypt in need of people who are familiar with French business terms," said France's ambassador to Egypt, Patrick Le

Clercq.

"With the renewed open-door policy in this country, the GATT treaty and the establishment of foreign and Egyptian joint husiness ventures, foreign language speaking graduates are now in high demand," said Dr Abdel-Wahab Abdel-Hafez, president of Am Shams University. "We expect the new sections to fill an important gap in our ecooomy," he added.

Both officials and students are proud of the department's high educational standards. Class size remains small and students are carefully selected for admission. Applicants must complete upper levels in French, score a minimum of 80 per cent on their French final exams and pass a com-

pective interview.

Tesehing is conducted equally in French and in Arabie; that portion of the syllabus taught in French is done by French professors. The idea is to introduce a style of instruction that does not depend on rote-learning, a point made by Professor Jean-Claude Lauribe, one of the French instructors employed at the faculty. "The system apply here is the same as in France and all European countries. We concentrate on developing the student's mental skills by training

them to take the initiative, conduct research and

develop points during lectures," he said.

The first class of graduates joined the French section after spending their first two academie years in the Arabic section. According to Ahmed Mustafa, a recent graduate, the differences between the two sections were significant. "In the Arabic section I felt lost among the 3,000 other students crammed into one class," he said. "During lectures, I could not understand a word because of the noise and crowds. I barely passed the first two years." Mustafa went on to score top marks after switching to the French department.

Other students at the faculty express the same hopes for the new sections. Haidi Sami, a first-

Other students at the faculty express the same hopes for the new sections. Haidi Sami, a first-year student who had scored 95 per eent oo her Thanawiya Amma (secondary school fioals) exams, ooted that such a score would have enabled her to take her pick of top colleges. The reason she gave for attending the faculty at Ain Shams was better job prospects upon completion of her degree. Injy Maher Badee, this year's top graduate, explained that she had postponed a 5-year scholarship to France io order to guarantee herself a decent job in Egypt first. "I am now satis-

eer____

company and hope the section expands to include larger oumbers."

Plans for expanding the department, which is fielding a growing oumber of applications every the section of the section

fied with my job as an accountant in a French

fielding a growing oumber of applications every year, are currently being debated. French officials are keen to keep numbers limited in order to maintain high standards, though ever increasing applications — even with the relatively high tuition fees — may make this difficult to achieve. French concerns have proven true so far as the Eoglish-department of the university is concerned; here oumbers have risen exponentially, making standards difficult to maintain. In the section's first year of operation, 340 students were admitted; the oumber doubled in the second; and in the third, 1200 were envolled. Hamdi Radwan, an economies professor who teaches in the English section, articulates this concern. "The overwhelming number of students has caused a significant decrease in standards. When the system started in 1992, a lower oumber of students gave us the chance to monitor the progress of each student individually. Now I am afraid we may end up with the same problems as the Arabic section."

Unlike the French, however, the English department has no external source of finance, making it unusually dependent oo student oumbers and fees. Recent reductions in fees to LE700 will have a powerful effect oo the department's overall standards, according to the vice-dean for Student Affairs and head of the English Department, Dr Mohamed Abdel-Meguid. "We can still manage, but we will have to abandon our plan to exempt top students from paying fees and we will bave to reduce the oumber of students in the future," he said. Radwan, similarly, thinks that lower fees will have an adverse effect on the department's efficiency. "The department still needs a well-equipped library, computers and language labs," Radwan said. "We also need more professors. So in order to maintain a high standard of education, we have to think of increasing

Many students have expressed their disappointment that the number of undergraduates in the department is so high, though they still think that the department will help them to find a better job once they finish their studies. Prospects for those enrolled in the Arabie sections are oot so rosy, however, where a certain amount of frustration at the oew developments has made itself felt. "We already face high rates of unemployment due to the large oumbers of gradu-ates," said Ahmed Yussef, a student in the third year of the Faculty of Commerce, Arabie department. "Now with the emergence of the English and French departments, we will have almost no chance to work, as most private companies look for language skills." And Naglaa Mohamed Farid, a third year student at the Arabie section, believes that the relative affluence of the foreign language departments creates a social gap among students. This gap can be immediately detected upon entering the campus, she said. Both English and French sections enjoy new, cleaner auditoriums. Arabie department undergraduates regret that "only the well-off receive a five-star educa-

Equipped for success

at Alexandria University's Faculty of Commerce

Shahira Samy visits the English language department

Ghada Kandil, a recent university graduate, initially intended to enroll at the American University in Cairo. However, she decided the English section at Alexandria University's Faculty of Commerce would help her "get a decent up-to-date education that would enhance my chances of getting a good job upon completion of my graduate studies."

Seeking the chance for a better future seems to be the main reason why students decide to join this department. Others are attracted by the small numbers of students in the English section compared to the thousands crammed together in huge balls in the Arabic section of

the college.

The class of 1995 was the first to graduate from the English language department at the Faculty of Commerce. Established in 1990, the concept behind the department emerged while plans for the improvement of graduate education in general were being discussed. At present, the English language department offers specialisation in accounting, business administration and economics.

"When we started applying new educational systems in the Arabie department, we thought of having a special section which would grant

certificates equal to those granted by renowned foreign universities," explained Dr Ahmed Nour, dean of the Faculty of Commerce.

Dr Essam Salem, president of Alexandria University, noted that the English language department at the Faculty of Commerce was the only one of its kind in the university. In the near future, he added, a French language department will be established at the Faculty of Law in cooperation with the French Cultural

Centre and French universities.

"We are very much aware of the need for foreign language graduates in the employment market. I strongly advise students to improve their language skills — a weapon for a successful graduate." said Salem.

their language skills — a weapon for a successful career," said Salem.

Dr Abdel-Aziz Agameya, professor of economics at the Faculty of Commerce, said, "We focus on accepting a very small number every year to provide them with the best possible service." For the past four years, only 160 students were enrolled for each section. This year, however, the oumber has increased to 300. But the faculty board warns that too many students in the section would seriously

many students in the section would seriously affect the section's standards.

He added that because of the small oumber

of students io the English section last year, the faculty was able to offer summer training opportunities at banks and brokerage companies to more students.

extra time allocated for additional consultation with professors. "Not all professors are willing or have the time to give extra attention to students", says Heba, which means many would

According to Dean Nour, academie books are selected according to the best international standards. "Each professor is free to order the best references in his field," he said, adding that this raises the standard of education in the

On the whole, the project seems to be successful and prosperous. With the exception of a few drawbacks, the English language department of the Faculty of Commerce offers high quality education. After spending 4 years at the department, Kandill describes her experience there as "good" and "improving". In her opinion, professors are growing more accustomed to the system, a fact reflected in the thoroughness of their work.

"I feel sure of myself when I am being interviewed for jobs. I have no problems expressing myself in English using specialised terms. Interviewers are impressed," says Kan-

However, some negative aspects remain.

Heba, a second-year student, would like to see

extra time allocated for additional consultation with professors. "Not all professors are willing or have the time to give extra attention to students", says Heba, which means many would resort to private lessons, an eternal nightmare at the faculty. Kandil suggests more emphasis on computer skills, mentioning that the current course is insufficient.

Nour eited a lack of funds as an obstacle to funding members of the staff to train abroad or inviting foreign professors to lecture in Egypt. Both Nour and Agameya agree upon the necessity of proceeding cautiously with the expansion of foreign language departments in the country's universities. "Otherwise, these mush-rooming departments will give a bad reputation to English language education in Egypt in general," warned Agameya.

Finally, although they are in far better condi-

tion than their fellow colleagues at the Arabic department, all English language students interviewed by the Weekly looked forward to being accommodated in "air-conditioned, nicely furnished lecture halls".

Edited by Found El-Gawhary

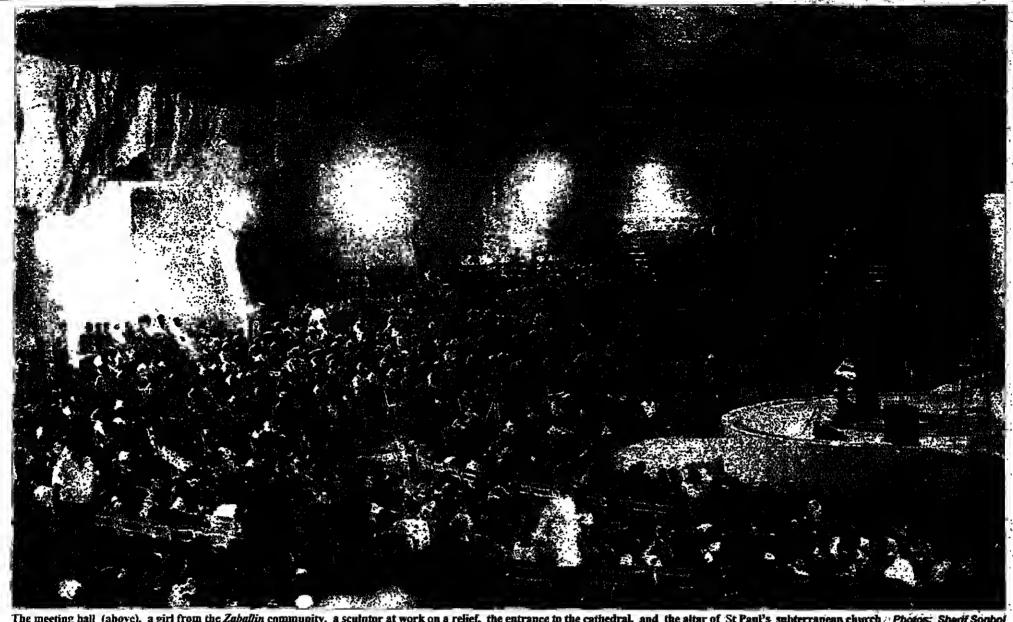












The meeting hall (above), a girl from the Zaballin community, a sculptor at work on a relief, the entrance to the cathedral, and the altar of St Paul's subterranean church . Photos: Sharif Sonboi

A monastery and a miracle

A cavern cathedral forms the centrepiece of a magnificent monastery in a series of caves in the Mogattam Hills. Sherine Nasr describes the unusual site and the history and legends surrounding it

In the zaballin area of the Moqattam Hills, one of Cairo's poorest areas, lies the magnificent monastery of St Samaan. This monastery is no ancient monument - in fact it is a unique combination of the natural and the architectural. The area of the monastery embraces several natural caves, four of which have been converted into churches.

The main structure, the cathedral, is oo a scale so huge as to be able to accommodate around 20,000 peo-ple. At the far end, on the ceiling before the large altar, is a huge, high-set relief of the Virgin Mary carrying the holy child. It is said to have been found, already carved, before the cathedral was excavated. "Almost a million tons of limestooc were removed from inside the cave before the cathedral took its present form," said the aptly-named Father Samaan, senior priest at the monastery. "Before the rubble was removed, we had to creep inside the cave on our knees to see the

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statue." The carving was originally rough, he said, but after the cathedral was excavated, the carving was pol-

The massive cathedral comes to life every Thursday evening as coogregations of thousands fill the massive auditorium, dominated by a relief carving on a buge rock, towering high above the people and depicting a scene from the Sermon oo the Mount.

Also inside the monastery area is another rock-hewn church. St Mark's, a subterranean structure whose ground-level dome is decorated with colourful frescos of the crucifixion and resurrection. Above St Mark's, approached by a stairway, is another part of this cave, now transformed into a giant meeting hall, adorned with life-size reliefs depicting the local miracle. St Paul's church is another underground cave, discovered by chance in 1986. While work was in progress on

other areas of the site, a giant block accidentally fell from a hulldozer. It plunged through a hole into a deep cave, supported by two columns. Father Samaan said that the church was dedicated to St Paul because its inner features resemble those of St Paul's Monastery on the Red Sea coast. St Samaan is dedicated to a local saint,

goes, providence stepped in and produced Samaan. The humble shoemaker moved a hill from its previous location at the then Birket Al-Fil (now Al-Helmiya

who, by tradition, moved the Mogattam Hills. The

moving of the hills of the Mogattam have remained

such a strong image in people's minds that even a

thousand years after the miracle, a monastery on the

Samaan's biography, as recorded in an ancient man

uscript in St Anthony's Monastery in the Red Sea

area, relates how, in 979AD, the Fatimid Caliph Al-Muezz Liddin Allah, a great enthusiast of religious de-

bates, frequently gathered Christian and Jewish re-

ligious leaders together in open discussion. The Jew-ish government minister, Jacob Ibn Kalis, in an effort

to cast doubt on the Christian religion, quoted from the Bible. St Matthew's gospel: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain,

remove bence to yonder place; and it shall remove;

The caliph was naturally sceptical and was about to

declare the Christian faith a fallacy when, the story

and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

site is named after the miracle worker.

Al-Gedida) to Moquitam, and the Christians were Until the early 1970s, there was no proper church in



the area, although 95 per cent of the local Christians; then some 17,000 thousand peonow around 25,000. Back then. their homes were improvised hovels. Later some proper housmg was provided and

a church built on a 1000 square metre area. Two of the church's icons depict the miracle of Mocattam. One shows how the rays of the sun filled the canam. One shows now the rays of the sim infect the space beneath the hills as they moved, the other depicts Samaan as a middle-aged, bald, one-eyed man carrying a large jar on his back.

"St Samaan is always portrayed this way, because he used to distribute water to the old and disabled even

before his fame as a miracle worker spread," explained Father Samaan. Some relies of St Samaan, and a broken jar, said to be one be carried, are now in pride of place in his cathedral, some 200 metres from the church, placed there in 1991 after their discovery in St Mary'a Church in Babylon Al-Darg in Old Cairo.

Treasures don't go to Florida

Efforts by an American exhibition broker to arrange. an American tour has come to a halt. Omayma Abdel-Latif reports

The Ministry of Culture has decided to block a planned exhibition of Egyptian artifacts in the United States.

The 72-item exhibition, entitled 'Splendors of Ancient Egypt', and including rare statues of Khafre, builder of the second Giza Pyramid, Queen Hatshepsut, a bust of Ramses II and an Akhenateh collection, was earmarked for a three-year tour of five American states, beginning with Florida, on 11 January.

The decision came only a few days after Dr Ne'mat Ahmed Found, who opposes the policy of "sending Egypt's invaluable heritage" on foreign trips, began legal action against the Ministry of Culture and the impreme Council of Antiquities SCA to ban the tour.

Like previous exhibitions organised in various parts of the world, this one came under fire from Found, as well as other critics, on the grounds that priceless artifacts might be damaged or replaced with fakes during the tour.

Found had the precedent of smother legal victory against the Ministry of Culture on her side, and was confident that the court would take her side this time too.

We managed to stop the Tokyo exhibition two years ago, also by court order," she said. "Although the artifacts had already been shipped abroad, we brought them back to where they belong.

News of the exhibition was leaked about two months ago, arousing fierce opposition not only because of the pricelessness of the exhibits, but also because it was organised by an exhibition broker. A source at the SCA told Al-Ahram Weekly that there had been differences between the Ministry of Culture and the American broker on the issue of safety guarantees and the amount of insurance fees, which the ministry estimated at \$200 million although revenue was not expected to exceed \$10 million.

The exhibition was the first to be armed since the court order blocking the Tokyo tour. Over the past two years, the Ministry of Culture has turned down several requests to hold cities. But last June, the ministry's exhibition committee approved five exhibitions, three in the United States, one in Britain and the fifth in Thailand.

decision was announced, Secretary-General Dr Abdel-Halim Noureddin had said that the exhibition would provide much-needed revenue for the restoration of monuments and the excavation of new sites.

"As long as these exhibitions stick to the rules set by the exhibition committee regarding insurance policies and financial revenue, they remain good promotion for Egypt," he

However, the Ministry of Culture's decision that the treasures should remain in Egypt, much to the relief of Fouad and her supporters, was taken on the grounds of a "lack of safety guarantees with the American broker".

Travellers in Egypt

Egypt before Crimea

Egypt was never seriously considered by Flor-Egypt was never part of Florence Nightingale's plan, but it marked a turning point in her life, as Elizabeth Rodenbeck reveals

ence Nightingale. Nor was marriage. She saw too many of her early Victorian contemporaries being led like lambs to the slaughter and turned into docile baby machines. She wanted to be a nurse, an idea which gave her mother the vapours and elicited stony opposition from her en-tire well-to-do family. Why, a nurse was noth-ing but a coarse, drunkeo trollop. But she had made up her mind. All through her twenties Florence stifled her feelings and tried to behave like a dutiful daughter. She was bored to stupefaction by the domestic busywork of home, but never gave up on her secret agenda or gave in to the idea of marriage, though she had several proposals.

"Send her on the grand tour of Europe", suggested her father. She went, and spent most of the time looking at workhouses and slums. 328937-221950-221951/2-328936 "Have her presented at court!" suggested her mother. She was presented to the young Queen Victoria, just a year older than herself. But she wasn't interested and withdrew into her private dreams at home and became more neurotic than

> "Send her to Egypt!" they said in desperation in 1849, and to Egypt she came for five months in the company of a sympathetic older couple. And though inwardly she was still pondering the call from God which she felt she must somehow answer, outwardly the very strangeness and beauty of Egypt as seen from the SS Parthenope, the party's dahabeya, the monuments, the sunsets, the peaceful river, the golden sands of Nubia were a potent tonic. She came laden with learned books on Egyptology which she studied conscientiously, but her keenest interest was reserved for the people, the state of their health and their living conditions. She described them in voluminous letters home which were collected by her sister and later published in 1854.

But she wasn't always serious. She had the usual fun, riding one of Cairo's 20,000 donkeys through streets "fragrant with oriental smells".

"You address your ass in the tenderest terms, and in the purest Arabic; you adjure him by all the names of friendship to stop; but he understands no Arabic except his driver's and on he goes full trot, while you are making hairbreadth 'scapes at every corner, yet receiving hardly a lovely little brown child riding on her shoulder, knock", Florence wrote cheerfully to her cou-

"After threading these streets for miles, we came out upon the square where stands the magnificent mosque of Sultan Hassan, and above it the Citadet, up which we wound... till we came to the mosque built by Muhammad Ali and not yet finished, though in it lie his bones. It is of splendid size, but tawdrily ornamented, and looks better now with the scaffolding supporting those lofty domes, than ever it will do when decorated like Drury Lane. The obnoxious female [i.e. berself] is still admitted." She rode out to the pyramids and to the City of the Dead, inhabited by "houseless wanderers, ghouls and lepers".

The regime of the new Sultan Abbas, the grandson of the recently deceased Muhammad Ali, struck her as cruel. "Abbas Pasha is so furiously Mohometan that he has just dismissed all Christians from his service, all that he could do without, besides 900 Coptic scribes who are falien into the lowest poverty thereby." She was appalled by the wretchedness of the people:
"Oh! If one could either forget, or believe, that
the people here were one's fellow creatures,
what a country this would be!"

The party hired a conventional dahabeva for 30 pounds a month, and Florence made a fine appliqued flag. On their trip up the Nile she took the opportunity to explore the villages: along the banks and see how the people lived. They call me 'the wild ass of the wilderness snuffing up the wind", she wrote.

Egyptian impressions stayed long in her memory. Thirty years later, in 1879, she described the glorious light of an Egyptian sunset... where all glows with colour, not like that of birds and flowers, but like transparent emeralds and sapphires and rubies and amethysts... the herds wandering their way home on the plain of Thebes by the colossal pair of sitting statues.

Thebes by the colossal pair of sitting statues.

Florence Nightingale draped garment, plying her distaff, a naked,

In spite of the glory of the monuments, the scenery and the sumsets, Florence continued to react with shock and horror to the misery and



degeneration of the monks "whose very religion has become an abomination." Christmas was spent at Luxor and Florence remarked that "the huts in the temple were each full of calves, turkeys, hens, goats, camels together with their men and women one cannot conceive how even Moses could set about his work of regeneration here."

On 6 January 1850, the Parthenope reached Elephantine Island near Aswan: "a tumbled lair

> trip from Abu Simbel she noted that 200 workers at the sugar factory at Huw were paid the equivalent of a penny and three farthings a day. At Assiut the par-ty took needles and pins as a gift to Mustafa the cook's wives, but Florence was shocked again: "Polygamy strikes at the root of everything in women...

> she is not a wife, she is not a mother."
>
> By mid-March they were back in Giza and soon took the steamer to Alexandria. Before sailing for Europe, Flor-ence spent some days with the mis-sionaries of St Vincent de Paul. Their humanitarian efforts on behalf of downtrodden people inspired her with admiration and affection. Here was a way of life that she could understand. Was this what God had been telling her to

Though Florence's trip to Egypt was conventional and relatively uneventful, it nevertheless marked a turning point in her life. On the way home she spent a few days in Germany at one of the only training schools for murses then in existence. She had never been so happy. And when she got home, opposition evaporated and she was finally allowed to train as a muse.

Letter extracts from Florence Night-ingale's Letters from Egypt: A Journey on the Nile 1849-1850, republished it 1987 by Weidenfeld & Nicolson



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Dreading the dredlocks: Ghana slipped past Egypt to secure a 2-1 victory. Will the ACN be any different?

Africa gears up for ACN cup

In what will prove to be the biggest continental sports tournament since the 1995 All Africa Games io Zimbabwe, soccer teams from 16 African countries will converge on South Africa on 13 January for the 20th African Cup of Nations (ACN). Almost one year ago, 43 teams entered the ACN's preliminaries, and out of the pack, 14 rose to the top to secure a place in the championship. The race to the top, however, is far from over. For three weeks these-14 teams, along with South Africa which was guaranteed a place since it is hosting the competi-tion, will be divided into four groups and will battle it out in a series of matches in see who emerges as

the cup holder for this year. Along with traditional competitors and favourites such as Egypt, Ghana, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, it will also include several newcomers like South Africa, Liberia and Angola. Nigeria, a long-time competitor will not be participating for political reasons, and, at time of press, it was not clear whether Guinea will take its place.

What will add to the pace and intensity of the matches is the participation of various key African soccer players who play on the professional circuit in South America and Europe, like George Weah of AC Milan, Anthony Yeboah of Leeds United and Oman Biyick of Mexico's Club America. Other young up-starts hope to use the tournament as a means of catching the eye of professional scouts itching to discover another Pele, who, incidentally, will be in attendance.

The 16 finalists for South Africa '96 Group A

South Africa

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A AFRICA

As the host country, South Africa qualified automatically, no doubt a pleasing turn of events for the country which has never participated in this championship before. And, if national team coach Clive Barker has anything to do with it, South Africa could walk away with the cup and a hig smile on the faces of the team members and President Nelson Mandela. This, however may be little more than a pipe dream as the young team has the ability hut may not have the experience to defeat the

Key players: Doctor Khumalo, Phil Masinga, John

Egypt Known as the Pharaohs, the Egyptian national team is the Group A favourite and champion in 1957, 1959 and 1986 ACN competitions. While many of the team's previous performances were less than promising, a strong finish in the All Africa Games, and a pep session with team coach Ruud Krol will help them hegin the matches with a clean slate and a little pepper.

Ker players: Ahmed Kass, Magdi Tolba, Hadi Khashaha.

If internal squabbles over money are resolved am-

put up some strong competition, and at the least. make up for their poor performance in the 1994 World Cup. However, a great deal depends on their opening match with South Africa. Key players: Omam Biyick, Alphonse Tchami.

Angola

Although new to the ACN, Angola should not be counted out until the fat lady has sung. As Group 6 winners in the qualifiers, Angola packs enough power to cause some upsets and squeeze past other teams while other Group A contenders kick the stuffing out of each other. Key players: Fobrice Akwa, Paulo Alves.

Group B

Zambia Following a plane crash which killed most of the Zamhian team's players in 1994, they went on to be-come runners-up in the ACN. And, while recent performances may be unstable, Zambia could still make it into the final four.

Key players: Kalusho Bwalya, Kenneth Molitoli.

Algeria

Along with Zambia, Algeria is a Group B favourite, a standing complemented by their 1990 ACN victory. For coach Ali Fergani and his team, it has been a tough year, spotted with terrorism, but they still made it through the Group 4 qualifiers behind

Key players: Kaci Said, Abdel-Hafidh Tasfoout. **Burkina Faso**

This is the team's second shot at the cup, and no doubt, they hope to fare better than they did in their 1978 debut where they were knocked out in the first round. They have, in their favour, the fact that they were the surprise winners in the Group 7 qualifiers, where they defeated Côte d'Ivoire and Morocco.

Key players: Abou Quattara, Ousmane Sanou. Sierra Leone

The hurden of proof lies heavily on the shoulders of coach Roger Palmgren as he leads his team into its second ACN competition. Short of last place, any finish this year will probably be better than last year where they were not placed in the rankings. But to save some face and a few goals, they will have to contend with Zamhia and Algeria, two top contenders. The key to their pseudo success may be this year's team made up of a mix of professionals and local players. This mixed team may be shaken, hut

Key ployers: Mohamed Kallon, Ibrahim Koromo

Group C

Tournament favourites and champions in 1980 and 1994, Nigeria's last minuite decision to boycott the competition has elicited mixed reactions worldwide. Guinea may take its place.

Zaire

Champions in 1968 and 1974, and with Nigeria out icably, the 1984 and 1988 champions will be able to of the way, Zaire's shot at winning the Group C

competition looks even better. As the winners of the Group I qualifications, Zaire is aiming for nothing less than being in the top two. But, best intentions often fall short of reality, and Zaire's German-Turkish coach, Sygi Wander and team captain Jean-Claude Kabeya will have to put their money where their mouths are to succeed. Otherwise, they may find that they are eating humble pie. A second round

teams and the event

The 20th African Cup of Na-

tions soccer tournament is

set to begin in Jo-

hannesburg's FNB Stadium.

Eric Asomugha profiles the

Key players: Jean-Claude Kabeya, Bunene Ngad-

Gabon

Another second-timer which, like Sierra Leone, did not place in the first appearance in the ACN, Gab-on's coach, Alain de Costa Soares is counting on a strong defensive game to lead the team to victory. Second round berth is a difficult task. The team first participated in the competition in 1994. Key players: Pierre Aubame, Guy Roger Namba

Liberia

Newcomer Liberia finished second ahead of Senegal in Group 2 qualifications. Much attention is on George Weah, but coach Wilfred Lardner has balanced the team with more than 13 professionals in Europe. Pigeon-holed with Zaire, Liberia's chance at making it into the second round is slim but not in be tuled out. Key players: George Weah, Christopher

Group D

Second tournament favourites and champions in 1963, 1965, 1978 and 1982, Ghana parades a mixture of die-hard old stars and youths from the reigning World Youth Cup champions.

Key players: Abedi Pele, Anthony Yeboah. Côte d'Ivoire

The 1992 champions, the Elephants are Ghana's arch-rivals. Their clashes have never been easy. and a repeat of the scenario where they crushed Ghana in 1994 will be the Eicphants' primary tusk (excuse the pun). Like Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire's success will depend much on its placing in Group D. Key players: Abdoulaye Traore, Aka Kouame.

Tunisia

The enormous task of rebuilding Tunisia's soccer programme after the 1994 Cup disaster has been coach Henri Kazperjak's main objective. How suc-cessful his efforts have been will be determined during this competition. Tunisia topped the lists in the Group 2 qualifiers. Key players: Shukri El-Ouoer, Mourad Chebbi.

Mozambique

Putting aside long years of civil war, Mozambique emerged as a surprise qualifier ahead of Guinea and Mali in the Group 6 qualifiers to win the chance of competing in the ACN for the second time. The team's first shot at the cup came in 1986. Despite its efforts, the prognosis is not good given the calibre of the other Group D teams. Key players: Chiquinho Conde, George Fer-

Some succor

3.2.96

ing bricks. Amira Ibrahim offers some insights into the status of Egypt's national soccer team as for soccer it departs for South Africa

Although Egypt's national soccer team came at the top of its group in the African Cup of Nations (ACN) qualifiers, critics and fans re-main sceptical about the team's expected performance in South Africa.

The reason behind this pessimism, critics maintain, is that the overall level of Egyptian soccer, as reflected by the top three teams, Abli, Zamalek and Ismailia, is nothing to write home about. These three teams walked away from the last three Arab and African competition with nothing to show for their efforts except a bruised ego.

further. Over the last two years, the Egyptian national team has fallen victim to a number of unsettling turns of events which included the replacement of five technical staffs. During the qualifying rounds for the ACN, the coaching staff was replaced twice.

The first blow to the team came with the defection of its Dutch coach, Nol de Ruiter, who fled from Tunisia two days before Egypt played the Algerian national team. While Egypt lost the match 1-0, de Ruiter offered a hasty explanation that be was frightened off by the wave of terrorism in Algeria.

Later, upon his return to Holland, the fleeing Dutchman explained that the real reason behind his sudden departure was a belief that Egyptian soccer would not progress so long as soccer officials continue to intervene in every facet of the game. Describing Egyptian soccer officials as being "short-sighted".
"They are more concerned about the goalkeeper, Shobeir, than they are about preparing the national team for the ACN," a

Dutch newspaper quoted Ruiter as saying. Ruiter went on in criticise the Egyptian press, claiming it had belped lead to public hostility against him whenever the team lost a game, including friendly matches. His has not been alone in voicing these complaints. Every foreign coach who has worked with the team has made similar assertions.

In an attempt to smooth over rough waters, the Egyptian Football Federation (EFF), appointed Ruiter's assistant, Mohsen Saleh, as managing coach.

Saleh led the team to the ACN finals in Johanneshurg, but at a price where he excluded and alienated many of the team's leading

Fans. however, wary of having an Egyptian head coach, were not satisfied. Disgruntled, a number of fans took it upon themselves to stone Saleh on the field, and a number of peeved players broke into his house and assaulted him. For better or for worse, the EFF remained steadfast in its decision to have Saleh coach the team — that is until the second string national team went off to Zimbabwe for the 1995 All Africa Games and brought home the gold.

At this point, Ruud Krol, another Dutchman who had been coaching the Olympic team, re-

placed Saleh. The Egyptian coach, battered and bruised, accepted his old position with a sign of relief. This move came two months before the ACN was set in start, and critics, again, were critical. Many wondered if a change so late in the game was the most prudent move. Others were concerned about whether Krol and Saleb

Saleh be nimble, Saleh be quick,

Saleh could not avoid fans hurl-

would be able to cooperate, or if professional ri-valry would overshadow all other efforts.

These critics did not have to wonder for long. Ten days before the ACN was scheduled to kick off, Saleh resigned his post as assistant coach, accusing Krol of neglecting him and usurping that Krol was unf as a coach and that his 4-4-2 game strategy was ineffective for the Egyptian team.

Saleh may indeed have been sincere in his criticism, or be may have been trying to save his skin in case Egypt lost badly in South Africa. In either case, it didn't make much difference. After the team was defeated 2-1 by Ghana in a friendly match about one week ago, he was again stoned. Lightening may not strike twice in the same spot, but stones seem in have a way of

finding their mark. Harassing and assaulting! Saleh, aside, the team, prior to its departure, faced other challenges. To the amazement of all who cared, it was revealed that there would be no professionals playing for the team in the ACN. In fact, with the exception of Hani Ramzi, a free agent who plays for Switzerland's New Shuttle Club, the national team does not have any pro-

fessional players on its rosters, at all. While in the past, the national team had been comprised of Ahli and Zamalek players, the new team includes only nine players from these two clubs. Most of the rest are young up-and-comers drawn from the ranks of Krol's Olympic team, This amounts in a classic case of sibling rivalry where the older players feel neglected in favour of the new players.
In addition, over the last few days, Krol has

replaced six players for reasons of physical fitness, or lack thereof. "This could be a major stumbling block that can ruin our chances in South Africa," said Krol, explaining his move. For the last three weeks, he has introduced a three-times-a-day training regiment which has the older players grumbling and humbling.

This, however, may all be in vain given that the leam, with the exception of three friendly matches played at home against Tunisia, Ghana and AC Roma, has had no international exposure. "No national team in the world," complained

Krol, "can participate successfully in such a hig competition (ACN) with only local preparation. Maybe not, but the difference between a winning team and a losing team is the ability to do the best with what is available. Krol, is embroiled in a contract dispute with the EFF as a result of the loss to Ghana. He has signed, but

the EFF is still delaying. Krol has yet to offer guarantees on the outcome of the ACN - perhaps a wise choice given the accuracy of stone-hurling fans.

Hand to handball combat

Fate and a couple of bad plays forced the Egyptian handball team to accept second place in the International Handball Tournament. Inas Mazhar reports from Spain's Cuidad Real

Two hundred miles south of the Spanish capital. Madrid, lies Cuidad Real, a small city in the heart of hullfighting country. But, from ine near of management to be seen was not athe capes of the matadors, but in the eyes of the handball players from four different countries, all of whom were vying for first place in Spain's International Handball Tour-

Egypt's world-ranked number six team arnament. rived in the stadium full of confidence, which vived in the dismay following a loss to the quickly turned in the first match. Playing the Norwegian team in the first match. Playing the Norwegiant they had played in quite a while, worst game may have a while, the Egypnans handed a 26-22 victory to Norway on a silver platter.

"It would have been difficult to win any match playing the way we were," said Assem El-Saadanyi, Egypt's coach. 'The Norwegians were not better than us, it is just that we played

poorly. They benefited from our errors." After a little R&R, the Egyptians came back the second day, recharged, full of confidence and swearing bloody vengeance. Taking on another Scandinavian team, Denmark, Egypt made up for the previous day's defeat by pulling ahead of the Danes, 31-29.
"We played a lot better in this match and de-

served to win," explained El-Saadani.

With a record of 1-1, the final day of competition would determine just where Egypt stood. And, after a hard-fought match, Egypt stood right behind Spain in second placa.

Although the Egyptian team took the lead in the first half, the Spanish team, perhaps recalling the old conquistador days, came back to even the score 13-13. Then, recalling that 13 is an unlucky number, they pulled ahead m lead 22-15 by the 20th minute of the second half. By this time, Egypt realised that it was behind and drove hard to score two additional goals. But with 10 minutes to go until the end of the

game, El-Sasdani changed the strategy by press-

ing on the counter-attacks and defence. The gamble worked, and allowed the team to score 10 goals in eight minutes. It was, however, not enough to close the gap. With four goals of their own, the Spanish team took the gold with a 26-25 victory.

Trailing behind Egypt was Norway which came in third and Denmark in fourth. Spain's Raul Gonzales was named best player and Egypt's Ayman Salah, best goalie.

Following the tournament in Spain, the Egyptian team traveled to Sweden on Monday in compete in the 1996 World Cup. For five days, the world's eight best teams will go head-tohead for the gold.



Ayman Salah, selected best gonikeeper of the fournament

Edited by Inas Mazhar

Mohamed Khan:

Human elements

His camera stands there, in the middle of the street, in the middle of the day, as the crowd ebbs and swirls. He watches people, and people watch night back

By the late 1970s and early '80s, the Egyptian film industry was undergoing a sharp turn which was to result, by the mid-'80s, in the emergence of a totally new genre, obscure to Egyptian audiences and critics alike: the misleadingly named

waq iyya gadida (neo-realism). Characteristic of this genre was the choice of characters, events, settings, and even actors unfamiliar to the beavily staroriented industry. The tone was melancholy, the rhythm deceptively monotonous: protagonists were depicted in real life situations, and audiences watched, bewildered, as they struggled through. Whatever the order of ranking, Mohamed Khan was undoubtedly instrumental in the birth and continuity of the genre.

Brought up in Egypt, Khan has been an earnest film viewer since his early teens. At the age of 18, be went to England, purportedly to fulfil his family's expectations, set on his engineering studies. His fascination with film was only to deepen. however, for a film buff, he had the best

During the early '60s, says Khan, "London was like a European cultural centre: fashion, music — the Beatles — art and film. There were films from all over the world; more than any other city in Eu-

During his A-level courses, Khan found out about the British Film School, where he soon began to attend an evening course in film technique. Mornings, be worked as a clerk in a trade indemnity company. Then cinematographer Said Shimi, Khan's childhood friend, wrote to him that the General Egyptian Company for Cinema, headed by prominent director Salah Abu Seif, was scouting out new talent. Hopeful, Khan came to Egypt and met Abu Seif, who asked him what he would like to do. Khan, embarrassed to tell the great Abu Seif that be also wanted to direct, answered: "Script writing". Asked to submit a sample of his writing, Khan had a script ready in three months. Called Faragh ("Emptiness"), it was submitted to the Reading and Script Department. 'The members of the committee evaluated my script, approved it and the company bought it. I was also asked to join the department," says Khan. But a year later he discovered he was "not really doing anything except reading some scripts from time to time. I reached a dead end, so I took the risk of resigning and went to

Again, Khan found himself in the front row: Lebanon was spearheading the Arab film industry during the mid-60s, and members as "a young man's adventure". He looked for any job in film. He was second assistant director in three films and first assistant in another but "all four were mediocre." So it was back to England in 1966 for another six years, a journey which he describes as "the dark period". Khan ended up in a biscuit factory, in a laundry, mini-cabbing: "I would take any job, even a manual one in the evening as long as I could attend the press film screenings during the day," he says. He began to doubt whether he would ever be able to return to film-making. After all, his only films so far were short projects, on 8mm and 16mm.

Three years later be started a publishing company. He wrote and published An Introduction To Egyptian Cinema in 1969
— the only book on the subject in English to date - and edited An Outline of Czech-

The and of the dark period saw the birth of his first 35mm short film, Watermelon: nine-minutes in black-and-white shot during a holiday in Egypt. Back in England. he opened a jeans store, got married and had his first son. His encounter in 1977 with prominent editor Nadia Choukry, who eventually edited all his films, was to have a major impact. "She wondered what I was doing with all my interest in film and encouraged me to return to Egypt and produce a movie," Khan says. And so he did. Fayez Ghali scripted Darbet Shams ("Shams's Blow"), and superstar Nour El-Sherif was approached to play the leading role. "He liked the script and offered to produce it, so I jumped at the idea because I lacked production experience," says

The film was a success at the box office. Because it was an action film, "I could easily have been pigeonholed. The entire industry thought of me as an action di-rector. I became the black sheep of the industry because I kept refusing scripts. I still didn't know what type of film I preferred making, and it took me three films to discover that," he says. Misunderstood, he was accused of vanity — an accusation flung at him until today. "Any kind of independence generates this kind of accusation; but eventually they realised that I'd be bringing my own topics." Khan brought "package deals"; he would choose the scriptwriter, actors, then look for a producer. "I was the one to decide," he

Khan has very rigid opinions of those involved in the film industry, "Real producers, if there are any, are very rare. Instead, we have financers who only care about profit; the producer-director relationship in the artistic sense does not exist. We lack producers who think of the subject, visualise locations and suitable actors. Although money-based conflicts did occur, they couldn't boycott me since all my films were profitable," says Khan. Four of his feature films were produced by major actors; he produced or co-produced another four himself.

In the beginning Khan collaborated with Said Shimi, who had a similar background and similar dreams. Khan is matter-of-fact about the way the relationship evolved. "As we grew up we went our separate ways. I think of a photography director the same way I think of an actor. Although every photography director feels (and it is his right) that he can shoot any type of film, I don't feel the same. Team work in film is not necessarily a marriage; it's exactly like casting to me. The same applies to writers: one writer can script a particular film better than another writer. But the most mature writer I know is Assem Tawfiq. I love his writing. It's like a wise man writing," Khan says.

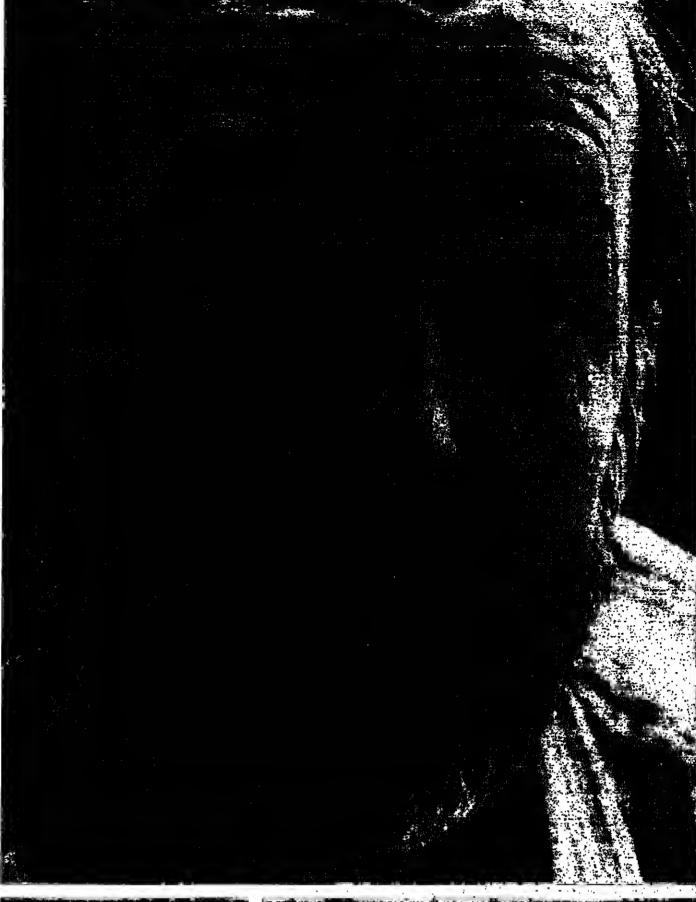
Khan's collaboration with Beshir El-Dik

opened a lot of doors, made us discover the possibility of a different kind of cinema," he says. Most of the ideas were Khan's, but what particularly interested him was El-Dik's descriptive style. "His works seemed more like novels than scripts," he says.

Khan has managed to preserve his genre and refuse typically commercial films. To him it is a simple equation: "Suppose my audience is around five million and the total Arab film audience is 90 million. I'm satisfied. Otherwise I would have to make different movies altogether... I wouldn't

It is his human approach towards people and situations, devoid of excessive melodrama or farce, and the subtly melancholic or humourous touches in the portrayal of his characters, that account for his films' outstanding quality. "I wish I could make a 'human' film, where the characters are see-through, understood, within their cultural and human dilemmas. Bringing such characters on screen with my own film language is a dream I hope will come true. This is the exciting thing about film. I think all the gimmicks of technology and special effects are going bankrupt. In the end people will return to the simple form, the human element..." he says.

"My emphasis is never oo the structure or development of the plot; it is always on the characters — an emphasis which is not very common here," he explains. This is why critics and audiences alike consister ly wonder where the storyline is. Khan's



Filmography

Darbet Shams (Shams' Blow) 1978 Al-Raghba (Desire) 1979 Al-Thar

(Vengeance) 1980 Ta'er Ala Al-Tariq (Bird on the Road) 1981 Maw'ed Ala Al-Asha' (Dinner Date) 1981 Noss Amab

(Half a Million) 1982 **Al-Harrif** (Street Player) 1983 Kharag Wa Lam Ya'od (Missing Person) 1984 Meshwar Omar

(Omar's Journey) 1986 'Awdet Mowaten (Return of a Citizen) 1986 Youssef Wa Zeinab (Youssef and Zeinab) 1986 Zawgat Ragel Mohem

(Wife of an important Man)

Ahlam Hend Wa Kamilla (Dreams of Hind. and Camellia) 1988 Supermarket 1989 Fares Al-Madina (City Knight) 1990

Al-Ghargana (The Drowned Woman)

Mister Karate 1993 Yom Har Geddan (A Very Hot Day) 1994



answer: "I'm more interested in the character of the human being. I talk about peo-

And indeed he does. The screen pulsates with life: people appear to be going about their daily routines — eating and drinking; using public transportation; dealing money, lending, borrowing, depositing, cashing, boying, selling, bribing. A familiarity builds up between people, between those watching and those on the screen. Their expressions and gestures allow the viewer to empathise with their hidden fears, anxieties, worries, deprivations and inner conflicts. The glamour that costumes and make-up give to stars in most films is replaced by emotions, attitudes, expressions and actions. Charismatic presence on screen is not the name of the game here. As a matter of fact, most climatic and conclusive scenes have relied on silent, composed, bin high-

After working with Khan, most actors

claim to have discovered radically new approaches and dimensions to the characters they play. Superstar Adel Imana worked in a shoe factory in Al-Harrif (Street Player); Ahmed Zaki was a home-

less car attendant in Mister Karate. Which brings us to another gripe against Khan's films: they expose life in the gritty, real parts of Egypt. Well, sor-ry, Khan never shoots in built sets. His locations are streets, alleyways, squeres, five-star hotels... "The location has to go with the characters. By shooting Dreams of Hind And Camellia in Heliopolis, which is not as poor as the characters [two maids] would have called for I didn't go to the extreme at all, But I still received criticism. It's just over-sensitivity from their side," explains Khan Veteran assistant cameraman Ismail El-Sos explains that Khan's camera stands smack in the centre of crowded streets — no apologies, no attempts at discreet dissimulation — unlike other di-

rectors of his genre who prefer to conceal it. "He is one director not afraid of exposing his camera in midday, in spite ofthat, hardly any of his shots are disturbed by the crowds," says El-Sos. Khan's films often tackle women's

position in society, their ambitions for improvement and the brick wall of reality they always come up against. His women are often romantic, sentimental and delicate, coupled with cruel, possessive and aggressive spouses who treat them as inferior physical possessions. The conflict crupts when the dream knight appears, seeking a union with the often married woman, a victim of tradition and prisoner of society (Desire, Bird on the Road, Dinner Date, Wife of an Important Man, Dreams of Hind and Camellia. The Drowned Woman),

Economic conditions also play a central role: money, in Khan's films, translates into pleasure and assistance to the needy,

but it is also a basic prerequisite for the stability of emotions. So the poor have perty jobs or steal, the rich are burdened by debts in their twisted businesses, while the middle class is exploited by both rich and poor (Return of a Citizen, Youssef and Zelnab, Dreams of Hind and Camellia, Supermarket, City Knight, A Very Hot Day).

Khan is reticent on this point, "I don't

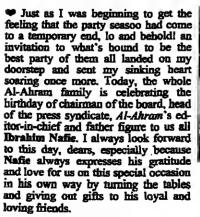
like to read into my films, I just like to make them and give them a life of their own. I'm a completely non-political person. If I have any political elements they come from the surroundings of my char-

Film makers of the younger generation think that watching a Khan picture is like reading poetry, while viewers say it is more like a window to real life. For Khan, he "would be satisfied just to be considered an interesting director."

Profile by Mohamed El-Assiouty

Pack of Cards

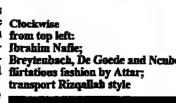
by Madame Sosostris



♦ So far this month, the music has been my life-force. Never, for all the Clockwise world, dears, would I have missed a from top left: great jazz performance by Yehya Kha-Ibrahim Nafie; ill and a brilliant piano recital by Mou-Breytenbach, De Goede and Ncube; shira Elssa at the Opera House, and flirtations fashion by Attar; Ahmed Sidki's marvellous operetta, A transport Rizqallah style Night From One Thousand And One Nights at Al-Gombouriya theatre. Start-

ing the year on a serene and harmonious note, on the fifth Moushira treated us to the works of Gamal Abdel-Rahim, Tchaikowsky and Sibelius. A couple of days later, Yehya did his groovy stuff in an extra special concert of the great works of the legendary Duke Ellington and John Coltrane with American saxophonist Chet Passarella, Irish





bass player John McCullough, Ihab Radwan on guitar, Amr El-Bahrawi on piano and Akram El-Sharkawi skillfully mastering the keyboard. So, with all that out of the way, I now have until the end of the month to attend Ahmed's operetta, starring actor Yehya El-Fakharani, singers Augham and Ali El-Haggar, and directed by Selim Sehab,





as many more times as I want.

♦ I always look for every opportunity to bring me closer to the region where I spent so many years, and which will always stay close to my heart. I may never have had a farm in Africa, dears, but I did have the pleasure of meeting two distinguished



the dynamic guest speakers at a lecture organised by the Soath African Embassy, under the auspices of Ambassador Justus De Goede, with the aim of informing Egyptians of the developments and changes within South Africa. Enlightening and stimulating, dears.

guests from South Africa recently. Pro-

fessor Willie Brey-

tenbach and Doctor

Patrick Ncube were

The Weekly's very own Randa Shaath is at this very moment in Switzerland, roaming the hills in a filly petticoat and warbling away. The

mights, however, are a different matter altogether; when I spoke to her a few days ago, she told me that if she heard one more cowbell she was liable to commit a crime. But thankfully, there are a number of more exciting matters that are keeping her oc-cupied. Most of you probably recognise her name cause it appeared alongside some of the most

spectacular photographs published in the Weekly over the past few years. Some of her best work, I believe, included the photographs published on this very page, in the Profile section. When Randa was awarded the six-month scholarship to Switzerland by Pro Helvatia, she decided to continue taking portraits of prominent Egyptian personalities, and, as you read this, an exhibition entitled Profiles: Photoportraits from Egypt" opens today in Boswil, to be later followed by a slide-show of her work in one of the country's largest daily newspapers in Zurich, the Neue Zurich Zeitung. Have no fear, dears, for you too will be able to see a selection of her portraits when they are exhibited in the Sony Gallery of the American University in Cairo in March.

♠ If you find yourself in Alexandria this month and feel like exposing yourself to a little more culture than usual, then go to the Spanish Cultural Centre and enjoy the sculptures of one of my favourite artists, Abdon Ramzi Rizqallah. Toddle along now dears, because until the twenty-third, this exhibition is guaranteed to take you places you've never been.

Call me a fashion victim, a dedicated follower of fashion, dears, call me what you will, but there was absolutely no way I would have missed fashion show at the Cairo Sheraton last week featuring the designs of the young and ambitious fashion designer Dalia Attar. The hotel's Tea Garden provided a pleasant back-drop to the stunning evening gowns, cocktail dresses and ex-quisitely designed gallabiyas. All of which, I have to tell you, were just so me that I had to hold myself back from crying out with giee.

